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Meliora latent ever;
Better than the seen his hid:
Time the Curtain's web will sever,
And will raise the Casket lid.

Thus from earth's immediate sorrow
Forward the Abyss future turn,
And from its unseen to-morrow
Fill to-day's exhausted urn.

London, John W Parker West Strand

ESSAYS AND TALES,

BY

JOHN STERLING,

COLLECTED AND EDITED,

WITH A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE,

47866

BY

JULIUS CHARLES HARE, M.A.,

RECTOR OF HERSTMONCEUX.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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FRAGMENTS FROM THE TRAVELS

OF

THEODORE ELBERT,

A YOUNG SWEDE.

REPRINTED FROM THE ATHENÆUM FOR 1828.

TRAVELS OF THEODORE ELBERT.

I.

LONDON.

THIS then is St. Paul's. What a miracle of man's pride! but how little does it suggest of man's humility! Here are proportion, size, strength, all the meaner attributes of beauty, and beauty too itself. But how little of fitness! There is nothing of religion. The emblems on the funeral monuments are all of the earth, earthy. The whiteness of the light, the bright, active business of the area, the payment at the door, the hard, stolid, worldly look of the Cathedral menials, what have these to do, I will not say, with Christianity, but with any other feeling than curiosity, with any deep sympathy, any trembling aspiration, with faith, or hope, or charity? Nothing,—nothing whatsoever. It may be a good cathedral; I am sure it is a bad church. This wide blank circumference, with the dusty banners above, and the statues of Victory and Neptune, and the stone lions around it, and the pattering feet and loud tones of idle wanderers,—it is an Exchange, a show-room, a promenade,—anything but a temple. It has

nothing of the shadowy magnificence of the Teutonic minster, harmonizing so well with all our higher and more obscure feelings. It was made as a haunt for Deans and Prebendaries; but who would think of bringing to it his prayers, his thanksgivings, and his penitence?

But if we leave the interior of the church, and mount to one of the outer galleries, there is a change indeed. We lose St. Paul's, and see nothing but London. The building becomes no more than a vantage-ground, from which to contemplate the vast city. Far and wide spreads over the earth the huge dim capital of the world. Look northward over that province of brick, to the dim outlines of the hills, which seem scarce more than a part of the murky atmosphere; and westward to that other realm of houses, outstripping the gaze, and encircling other distant towers, and stretching away to the seats of government and legislation; and again south, where the wilderness of human habitations is cleft by the wide and gleaming river, laden with all its bridges, and fleckered with a myriad of keels for wealth or idleness; and see too the broad fronts and soaring pinnacles of a hundred churches, and the port that raises against the sky its trellis-work of innumerable masts; and over all this is one hue of smoke, and one indistinguishable hum of activity.

It is difficult to reduce one's thoughts and

feelings at such a spectacle to anything definite. The mind at first is all vague restless astonishment, while the eye wanders over leagues of building, and everywhere sees the same working mass of busy vitality. How has the scene been produced, which so fills and stirs us? How is it, that this portion of the world has been so cut off from all the rest, and set apart as the agent of such peculiar impressions? Time has been, when there was nothing here but marsh and meadow and woody knoll, and the idle river rolling down its waters between banks only trodden by the wolf and elk, to a sea whither no human eye had ever traced its course. Time was, when the shaggy savage first leaned upon his club on yonder northern hill, turning his eager eyes over the green plain and the broad river, and then led down some straggling horde of barbarians to rear their huts of mud and wicker beside the stream, perhaps upon the very spot now filled by this enormous pile of architecture. The wicker was changed for brick and wood; and the narrow dungeons which were the homes of the other generations, threw their shadows over the weapons of the Roman legions, and over faces which wore the hues of every climate under the sun. The city became the home of burghers, the haunt of nobles, the seat of kings. The massy bridge, the moated castle rose; and the clumsy boats of those rude centuries began to

float hitherward with every tide, till, with the halls of hundreds of Barons, and the guilds of hundreds of trades, now filled with mustering armies, now desolated by plagues and famines, sometimes active with revolt, and again glittering with royal triumphs, London became a mighty city. The growth of many ages, the greatness of a whole people have made it what it is. Successes which gave wealth to the nation, gave more than its share to the capital; and misfortunes which desolated the country, have driven its population hither. The commerce of the world pours into its gates, and circulates through all its streets. Here are the thrones of three kingdoms, and of threescore colonies, of the provinces of the West, and the empires of the East; and hither come the gifts of subject millions. The tides of every sea, and the wheels of every manufactory on earth speed the current of existence through the veins of London. And thus it is, that I am now surveying at a glance this whole immense domain of bustle and competition, a kingdom of swarming streets, an enormous concentration of human wealth, power, and misery.

The recollections of London little accord with the feeling produced by the sight of it. At a distance we think of a few resplendently bright, of a few pre-eminently dark points in its history; —the slaughter of Roman Catholic and Protestant martyrs by royal tyranny and sectarian in-

tolerance,—the escape of the five members to the City,—the study of Milton,—the scaffold of Vane. But when we look upon the scene itself, we see little save the wide-spread collection of vulgar desires and fierce passions,—the size of Mammon's temple, and the number of his worshipers. We scarcely connect the idea of religion with those churches, which are so entirely imbedded among worldly structures, and many of which we know to be the mere husks and shadows of devotion, scarcely ever entered even by a score out of all those thousands now hurrying past them,—empty pretences and solemn mockeries! There is little to indicate any nobler intelligence than the mechanical, among the crowds all bent upon gain, and surrounded by the ingenious devices of luxury, which mingle in yonder streets for the various rivalries of traffic. Everything around is so alien from meditation, that we are inclined, not to study and think upon it, but to take part in its restlessness, and give ourselves up to its absorbing interests. There is nothing here, to which any feeling attaches itself, but the inclusion beneath our eyes of so many hundreds of thousands of our fellow-men. Extent, number, ceaseless and multitudinous occupation,—these are the objects which strike us. The details are only interesting as linked to these. For there is here no crumbling pyramid, or shattered Colosseum,

no volcanic mountain filling the atmosphere of a city with the menace of death. But we are face to face with a larger mass of living and busy humanity, than on any other spot of the world's surface.

And is not this enough to think of? If the height on which I stand would enable me to look down into the hearts of the crowds which pass beneath me, what could earth show of more profound and intense interest? These confluent streams of life are big with a thousand varieties of opinion and feeling, into all which we can in some degree enter, and which cannot be thought of without an anxious and mysterious curiosity. The greater number of these persons are ignorant, misguided, opposing their will to duty, never to passion, utterly reckless, and almost utterly wretched. I have, as it were, beneath my hand, a million of living souls; yet, in fact, to moral purposes, dead and decaying. Nurtured in alternations of toil and vice, they are through life bound down by the tyrannous necessities of their daily existence, or only loosed at intervals for the relaxation of debasing excess. Their sympathies are deadened by the want of sympathy around them: for the greedy poverty of the crowd has devoured almost all their love for their neighbour; and the more ravening selfishness of the rich has swallowed up the whole of theirs. These myriads know

scarce anything but the pressure of the hour; the retrospect of the past is similarly painful; and, when they look forward for a moment to the future, they transfer to it the direct suffering, or the unsatisfying pretence of pleasure, which deforms the present. The dust eats the dust; and the image of God is degraded in man to the likeness of the beasts that perish. Yet wherefore should this be so? There are also in the city I look upon, hundreds at least of expansive hearts and searching intellects, not indeed arrived at clear satisfaction, yet stirred by the prompting consciousness that there is a higher aim of being than the outward world or our senses and passions can furnish. They vary perhaps on innumerable subjects of prudence, of duty, of religion; but, while there is within a living power, restless and aspiring, there are also hope and strength and comfort. Above all, there may be even now moving among those undistinguished swarms below me, or dwelling upon that dim eminence which rises in the distance, some great and circular mind, accomplished in endowment, of all-embracing faculties, with a reason that pervades like light, and an imagination that embodies the essence of all truth in the forms of all beauty,—even such a one as Coleridge, the brave, the charitable, the gentle, the pious, the mighty philosopher, the glorious poet. How strange is the bond which unites all these together under the

name of man! Or is not that which they have in common, the very capacity, by the cultivation of which we might exalt the meanest of those I see, into perhaps the highest perfection I have thought of?

I am now standing on a building which proclaims to every eye in the capital of England the nominal supremacy of Christianity. Yet nine in ten of its inhabitants never turn a thought towards the benevolence and piety of Christ; while the majority of the remainder, with all the phrases ready in their mouths, which make their speech a confused jargon of worldliness and religion, yet feel, it is to be feared, no whit of love to God or man, but angrily cling to their sect, and idolatrously bow to some lifeless creed. Nor is this to be wondered at. Everything tends to make religion a matter of forms and names and lip-service, and thereby to deprive it of all permanent hold upon the hearts of men. All, all is selfishness; selfishness in the conduct of every one of the corporations which compose or minister to the Government,—selfishness in the intercourse of society,—selfishness in the anxiety of every class to weigh down those below it. But where is the attempt at the moral culture of the people? or who the men that, without thought for the feeding of their own vanity, or the spread of their own power, go forth in courage and sincerity for the regeneration of their country? If such there be,—and some

such there are,—that is, one or two,—where are the signs of their exertions? Track home to their lanes and cellars the craftsmen and the labourers, the servants of our pleasure; and see amid their families the unquiet tempers, the sullen rages, the evil cravings, the mutual unrepentant reproaches, which add a sting to penury, and throw poison into the waters of bitterness. But if, instead of stopping by the squalid fireside of the poor, we turn away to the dwellings of the rich, how much is changed in the shape, how little in the material! Here too are jealousies, and hatreds, and malignity, vulgar anxieties, and miserable ambitions. To be sure, the lean cheek of envy is fed from plate instead of earthenware, and self-oblivion is sought for in the costliest, not the cheapest, intoxication. But the miserable debasement of human nature shows as foul in velvet and jewels as in rags. Alas! if Jesus Christ were again to come on earth, as before, in humility and poverty, and were to lift up his voice in the streets of London, as in those of Jerusalem, he would scarce have less to reprove, and would scarce be more earnestly listened to. Would not the rich pass by the houseless wanderer with self-complacent scorn? and the rabble look with indifference or mockery on one whose garments were no gayer than their own, and who yet would tell them, in authoritative accents, of justice, and truth, and mercy? The professed

successors of Christ's Apostles would invoke the law against a lowborn teacher; the doors of this temple would be closed against him, if he came without a fee; and all the sects of England would be ready to cry out, *Away with him, away with him!* because he would establish no empty forms, consecrate no mere words, dictate no creed, and teach without a catechism.

Look at that dark roof: it covers a prison: and there the laws of the country proclaim that the most atrocious guilt is collected, the worst moral diseases. We do nothing to make men self-denying and conscientious. The Government says, *If you do not agree with us on every point of doctrine, you have no title to become wise or good; and we will not assist you.* We surround the people with innumerable temptations; we do little towards instructing, nothing towards educating them; and we set them the perpetual example of secure selfishness. A wretched child, born perhaps in a workhouse, and nurtured in a brothel, is taught to gain his daily bread by crime, and, compelled by the menaces of his protectors, and the physical sufferings of hunger, to trample down his moral repugnance, plunders some rich man's superfluity. Again and again perhaps he succeeds: at last comes the sudden vengeance of the law: to remedy the evil, he is thrown into a prison, probably the only abode on earth worse than his habitual home. He learns still more to glory in

criminal enterprise. The pride of endurance comes to his aid: and with no good feeling strengthened, no new idea of man's social relations or higher duties communicated, he is disgorged an outcast upon the world, again to prey upon his kind; until, before he is yet a man, some consummate outrage brings him to the scaffold. Then through all these streets pours the dense throng of eager spectators; and while the bell sounds from yonder tower, thousands without a thought either of terror or compassion, but with the same love of excitement which makes them seek the inferior stimulus of a dram, hurry from every corner of London to see the horrible removal from the world of a being, who perhaps never heard the name of God or duty, or received the sympathy of one human creature. Such is society. Such is London. Such is the working of the Church, which reared the fabric I stand upon, and which professes to teach the universal love, whereby we may arrive at *the temple not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.*

Such scenes as these might well disgust us with cities. It has been often said, and is in some degree true, that the evils of humanity are increased by being brought together in towns, that corruption thus communicates corruption, and that in these hotbeds every vice bears fruit after its kind. But be it remembered, that good has a tendency to spread as well as ill, and is no less

living and reproductive. In the enormous assemblage of minds I now survey, what an object is there for good men to act upon! Evil as are the arts and discoveries and means of enjoyment heaped up and displayed in this vast storehouse of the world and treasury of inventions, if they be considered as in themselves final ends, how immeasurably valuable are they as instruments of real improvement! And above all, placed here at the central heart and moving springs of the whole social earth, every beneficial impulse we may give will thrill, not merely through all the mass of this, the capital city of mankind, but will be felt in the utmost limits and recesses of the globe! From this spot the beneficent energy of a single man may produce good to the future generations of the whole race, which will be felt and celebrated, not merely when his bones are among the graves of the churchyard beneath my eye, but when the churchyard itself shall be encumbered with the ruins of this great structure; when the remains of a fallen city shall have choked up the channel of yonder river; when these palaces and towers shall have no inhabitant but the owl, and no visitant but the forest deer; and silence and desolation shall prevail where once was London.

II.

THE STREETS OF LONDON.

THE streets of London have a two-fold nature, a double existence. There are the dead streets, and the living streets, the stucco chaos of Mr. Nash, and the great collective majesty of John Bull. I have a respect for both, but more, I confess, for the masonry than the men. Go through London when its highways are deserted, and see those long vistas of silent habitations: they have as much of human interest about them as a million of living Englishmen. They are the works and the homes of men; but they carry with them comparatively little of that jar and bustle of the present moment, the element of an Englishman's existence: they have a past and a future. Here is a line of tall irregular houses, beneath which Milton has walked. Yonder are the towers that point to the stars from above the tomb of Isaac Newton and of Edmund Spenser. Along this magnificent street our children's children will linger and wonder, but will not, like us, be able to discover a dim and distant patch of hill, and believe that it is green with God's verdure. Below stretches, with its wide and broken outline, the prospect which is made boundless by such big recollections. There Charles was executed; there Cromwell has rid-

den on a charger, which may have seen Naseby or Worcester; there Vane has mused and sauntered. And beyond rolls the river, reflecting bridges and towers, with their myriad cressets, and the Cyclopean shadows of domes and palaces, and lifting its mist around those chambers, from which have proceeded more lastingly powerful decrees than from the Roman Curia, and which, (once perhaps, or twice) have been filled with the grave presence of better statesmen than ever declaimed in Paris, or muttered in the Escurial. Away again; and heeding neither that cathedral front, which spreads like the wings of an archangel, nor that star which gleams so high above it, nor the hundreds of buttrest pinnacles, which glimmer upwards like holy thoughts, stand for a few moments beneath those square, black, massy, and unwindowed walls: they are a prison. The rain is driving fast and slant along the gusty street; the distant rumble of some lagging vehicle is all the sound that I can hear, except the pattering of the raindrops, and the voice of the lonely wind; and now rings out, with slow and lingering strokes, the chime which, in a few hours, will knell to his execution some wretched criminal within a few yards of where I am now placed. There is a slit over my head, one edge of which gleams in the lamp-light. It opens perhaps into the very death-cell; and there is, amid the gloom which it does not illumine, a choking agony,

which stifles the prayer that desperation would force into utterance. Far away again, a shadowy intertexture of masts and cordage stretches between me and the skies; and some round antique towers rise against it. Within them Raleigh thought for years, and Jane Grey knelt to beseech forgiveness from Heaven for her innocent and beautiful life. These things,—so much less dreams or fancies than our own wretched selfish interests,—throng round us in the streets of London; but they only come to be repelled.

The world is awake; the mighty city is living with all its swarms; the tide swells and runs along ten thousand channels; its weeds and bubbles are all mingling, sweeping, rushing. They say that this is contagious,—that we cannot look on the frantic and intoxicating dance without becoming Mænads ourselves,—that it is impossible to be anything but a cog on the whirling wheel,—that you can only run and struggle, never think, in the streets of London. This is not true. The stream of fashion is strong: but the breeze of will, or even of habit, will enable us to navigate against it. In the one or two hours of the four-and-twenty, when the town is silent and solitary, it is full of matter; but it is also very pregnant of other things besides ledgers and betting-books, when the tumult is at the wildest. True, there is more of effective movement in the mind of one philosopher or poet in

one half-hour, than in all Cornhill in a century; but it would be possible to combine the outward and inward activity. We are in London jostled, carried on, distracted by a thousand objects, isolated in the most eager and crowded tumult of human beings to be found upon the earth. We will go along with it; but we will look at it, and think of it, as we go.

For my part, give me wealth and leisure; and I would as soon be here for a day, as in the greenest nook of Devonshire. I look round me for half-an-hour, and find the sweep of uniform employment and monotonous pleasure by no means so destitute of salient points and occasional interludes, as most of such continental scribblers as myself would persuade us. London too has its carved work, and its inscriptions, its quaintnesses and glories, and touches of sorrow or beauty. There is a poetry of the paving-stones for him who can find it out: and, honour be to human nature! even this enormous torrent of its dregs carries with it some gold-sand and blossoms, contains something on which the philosopher may ponder, the artist meditate. Men's pulses and thoughts are stronger, after all, than the British Constitution or the steam-engine. There, at that crossing, stands a miserable looking dwarf, with his ruined hat in one hand, and his wasted broom in the other. His features are writhed into that almost grotesque wretchedness,

which so often pursues personal deformity. A dozen people have passed him by. Here is one, an iron-looking, middle-aged man, without a hair of ornament or of error in his whole dress. He puts his hand into his pocket, as if he were afraid it would be burned, hastily flings the beggar some money, colours up to the eyes and looks angry when he is thanked, and walks on as if to escape from the infamy of giving alms to a street-sweeper.

Yonder is a church-yard. The church is fine, with abundance of bad science and bad taste, yet full of richness, variety, and genius. It is Wren's, which accounts for these qualities. The soil around it, the narrow, irregular, iron-railed area, is paved with flat grey slabs; and the very dust of these Englishmen must be jammed and jostled. But some children have found entrance to the cemetery, and are playing, as if they had not been suckled in a town, upon the smooth grave-stones. How much of gladness and consolation is there in the young voices and loud laugh, which ring out among the rattle of coaches, and the unceasing buz of the multitude! Yet alas! how evident on those little faces is the stamp of bad education! how obvious is it that the features of all but one of them are drilled into a mechanical deadness! I speak to the exception, and find that he goes to an infant-school. So that here too, in the very core of systematized and congregated debasement, wisdom and good

are gushing forth, and healing what they were not allowed to prevent.

There stands, at the corner of a street, the ambulatory theatre of that great actor and hero of tragedy,—Mr. Punch. He has obtained a motley, but a merry audience,—half a dozen of those personages who bear about them the insignia of their trade,—soldiers, butchers, dustmen, chimney-sweepers; then there is a score of artisans, some looking wise and dignified with all their might,—others without shame 'holding both their sides,'—several Irish labourers, fresh from Munster, roaring with glee,—and a troop of children, who, at every blow of that magic wand on the head of poor Mrs. Punch, re-echo it with shouts and chimes of laughter. Some Scotchman at my elbow has been complaining that Punch has not partaken of the improvements of the age, that he is behind the nineteenth century. The malison of every quiet good-humoured traveller on the eternal upstart insolence of this nineteenth century! The world is improving,—who doubts it? But the human mind and men's affections are the power that pushes it on. They were before the nineteenth century, as they were before the first; and they will be after it, as they will be after the ninetieth. I love the people for loving what their fathers loved, and what they themselves have loved from the earliest, most bawling, most turbulent

years of childhood. There was perhaps but little of creation in the original devising of these puppet-shows; there is assuredly none in the minds of those who exhibit them; but how much is there in the hearts of the labourer and the child, whose open mouths and dancing eyes are so instinct with imaginative joyousness! I know a man, fit, if any, to be the Plato of our day. He once talked to me in the middle of the Exchange, about the allegories in the beginning of Genesis: Mr.——— rubbed against him; and I was annoyed by the contact. Here he is in the midst of this group of happy wonderers, his noble face reflecting the gladness of those around him, and seeming to sympathize with all the extravagant thumpings and grotesque noises of the wooden pantomime. And he is in his place.

If I were forging incidents, instead of describing them, I would make some mighty 'tragedy in gorgeous pall come sweeping by,' as a contrast to the previous picture. But instead of this, when I turn my eyes, I see a poor-looking man in black, with a little coffin on his shoulder, the narrow covering of which is edged with white; and behind it walk two mourning women and a child. Amid the concourse of the busy and the idle, they do not hurry or look around them. They are absorbed into the gloomy depth of their own sorrow. Though they were too poor to purchase an array of lamentation

for their offspring, a triumph of grief, a cavalcade of splendid mourners, there is enough of agony within their hearts to supply tenfold the lack of plumes and horses. Amid the magnificence of wealth, and the earnestness of occupation, they linger and totter forward to the obscure cemetery, like a wounded raven fluttering through the chambers of a king. The mother is following the child of her bosom to the grave, where no blade of grass will spring above the dust, and where a thousand busy feet will daily desecrate the place of death.

They are lost in the throng; and here comes instead, with piteous looks and broken supplications, the ragged Italian beggar. His features have the complexion and mobility of his country; and there looks out through their olive squalidness the quick dark glance of the transalpine eye. The boy can scarcely speak a word of English; but that various garb, with glimpses of the skin beneath,—so fine a study for Murillo,—those hatless locks of sable irregularity, the monkey grinning through crimson rags upon his shoulder, and the hand extended for an alms, all tell a plain story of want and beggary. Poor fellow! an Englishman should feel bound to buy his secrecy on the subject of fogs and street-keepers. I have seen him burst into tears, when a butcher's boy rapped his hairy playfellow on the nose with a stick, and then offered to fight

him. The lad gave a look for a moment, that spoke of his country and its fierce revenge. But he felt his impotence; and a gush of shame and sorrow was his only answer. The chances are, that he will be found to-morrow under a tree in Hyde Park, stone-dead, with his pulseless hands still seeming to clasp the little animal which he was attempting to warm in his breast. Alas for poor Luigi! The chatter and mow of his desolate friend, Jacko, is the only moan that will be made for him.

Such are some of the incidents that break, to an observant eye, the monotonous rushing of the London population. He who is among the crowd, without being as busy as themselves, would be as ill off as Ixion, but for some such interposition of human nature in other shapes than its avarice and contentions. I stand among a million of men, streaming away into eternity, and each striving to jostle, pull back, and outrun his neighbour; and I wonder much, and pity more. But even this heady current cannot sweep away all, which in more tranquil waters is the out-growth of humanity; and I should lose that faith in man, which is as important as faith in God, if I could think that any one, the most wretched of all these thousands, is left utterly without a seed or relic of good. It is hard however, where the mass is so absorbingly interesting, and the individuals so undistin-

guished, to retain and cherish the feeling, that each of these atoms is in truth a living mind, in which are laid the germs of wisdom and of goodness; and, while we are whirled along by the general movement, it is impossible, without an earnest love for men, to keep alive the consciousness that we are bound by a thousand sympathies, and by identity of nature and destiny, to the most degraded things of all the throngs around us.

III.

THE STATE OF SOCIETY IN ENGLAND.

BY society, I do not mean the intercourse between persons of the same class, which friendship, or the desire of relaxation, or the madness for amusement produces; but I mean the condition of human nature, in which men are assembled together and bound by laws for the comfort and protection of each other. This social union is of course of a very different kind in various countries; and I intend to comment on some of the peculiarities which it seems to exhibit in England. Among these, the first I shall mention is the nature and degree of the influence exercised by wealth.

Wealth! wealth! wealth! Praise be to the god of the nineteenth century! The golden idol! the mighty Mammon! Such are the accents of the time, such the cry of the nation. There never was an age when money could accomplish so much as now in England. There never was a time when it was so necessary for comfort. There may be here and there an individual, who does not spend his heart in labouring for riches; but there is nothing approaching to a class of persons actuated by any other desire. To rest contented with poverty demands more courage in any man, than would furnish forth a score of martyrs or a

hundred heroes. He who would attempt to make the improvement of his own nature and of his age the business of his life, and therefore to remain satisfied with a spare and unostentatious subsistence, is railed at as one knowing nothing of the true objects of existence, a useless and contemptible being, to be treated with haughtiness by every gambler in the funds, by every man whose soul is put out at compound interest, whose very being is garnered in a money-chest, by every owner of hereditary acres, and oracle of hereditary wisdom. To succeed in life is to make a large fortune, without doing any thing which would send a man to prison. To be unsuccessful is not the being ignorant, or luxurious, or envious, or sensual, but simply the being poor,—the one unpardonable sin,—not against the spirit of God, but against the spirit of the world. In England the poor man walks surrounded with an atmosphere of shame. He lives upon the bitter crumbs of insolence, which fall from the rich man's table; and the common air of social humanity reaches him only in pinching blasts.

Wherefore is this? It is a dark ingrained spot in the national mind. It is a propensity which every good man must oppose; and which, if the country were in a healthy state, could never have grown upon it. But, like everything else, it must have its cause, or its causes; for they probably are many; and those causes it would be

well worth while to discover. The chief of them seems to be the nature of the government, which is founded, half on privilege, and half on wealth. But the wealth can buy the privilege; and with it therefore is ultimately lodged the whole political power of England. The government is a chrysocracy; not that form of polity, in which power is adapted to property, and the greatest mass of property has the chief dominion in the commonwealth; but that in which a small number of the richest individuals retain in their own hands the whole energies of the state. The law of succession in England, which gives the whole landed property to the eldest son, has set the fashion with regard to other property; and it is the ambition of every man who can obtain a large fortune, to transmit it undiminished to some one of his family. Those great inheritances become the standards by which opinion measures wealth; and, as society is not parcelled out by any impassable barriers, there is a perpetual struggle upward, from step to step, in the scale of riches, and of consequent estimation, which concentrates the whole mind, and every feeling of the country, into the voracity for gain. Power, rank, political influence, all the most splendid objects of human eagerness, are, to an Englishman, comprised in wealth; and what is there of wonder, that the talents, and industry, and enterprise of the

country, all that should be instruments of good, are devoted to this one pursuit?

Hence arises that indifference to everything in literature which does not minister either to amusement or profit. Hence it is, that novels, and works on political economy, are the only books that now find favour, except indeed those party histories, which are intended as engines of attack or defence for profitable monopolies: and hence the popular literature is completely stripped of that majestic character imprinted upon it of old, by minds which were directed to far other aims than the mere work-day business of vulgar interests. Hence it is, that nothing is an end in itself; nothing precious to man except as leading him to riches: and truth and benevolence are good only because they minister to the increase of the means of enjoyment.

The Englishman of the nineteenth century does not indeed, like those who laud the wisdom of our ancestors for the things in which alone they were foolish, discover, in the errors of the past, the links that connect it with the present. But he sees, in the merits of the present, a barrier that separates it from the past. In his view, we may analyse the mind by chemical solvents, and melt the heart in a blow-pipe; we may arrive at the innermost secrets of the universe by algebraic process, and, by extraction of the square root, lay

bare the deepest fibres of the tree of knowledge. A pair of compasses and a quadrant are means, not only of intellectual progress, but of moral regeneration. He thinks to discover God amid the skies, by taking an observation; and physical science is not merely the wand of Moses to call forth water from the rock, and to govern natural causes, but the fiery presence and living glory of the Deity. To him the most spiritual of poetry is dreaming, religion is mysticism, and enthusiasm madness. His vocabulary is confined to the one word *Utility;* and the beautiful, the true, the good, are its subservient offspring,—not princes and gods themselves, but slaves to the peddling merchant, Expediency. He weighs the happiness of mankind as a usurer his ingots, and numbers it as a farmer his sheaves: for to him it consists only in sheaves and ingots; and those faculties of our nature, which cannot employ themselves in reading bills of exchange, and reckoning oxen,—are a sound,—a fancy,—nothing. His philosophy is only another name for the general principles of profit and loss; and his mind is a blank signed with the style and title of MAN, but to be filled up as may be determined by the *science of circumstances.* In defiance of all the records of poor men, whose good feelings have made them happy, he sees, in political economy, not merely the science of the laws which regulate wealth, but the science which alone must govern the welfare of

our species; and he would be willing to sacrifice not only sight, hearing, and speech, so that he might be wealthy, but earnestness, gentleness, courage, and love of truth,—faith, hope, and charity.

Such is the philosopher of the day, and so different his wisdom from that which would have in it anything of a reforming or purifying power. But the most melancholy peculiarity of the age is the effect, on the great mass of the instructed classes, of this inordinate and all-devouring eagerness for riches. There is nothing round us of that meditative calm, in which the mind of a nation might deliberately address itself to high aims, and serenely take upon it the noble and laborious task of self-regeneration. The whole energies of the land and time are given up to "getting and spending;" and the exhausting anxiety for money leaves behind it a lassitude, from which no stimulants can rouse, except those which embody the fiercest turbulence of evil passions. The nation is thus diseased to the very core. Its physicians offer it poisons for remedies; and the malady which preys upon it, prevents it from discovering that it is not in the vigorous flush of health. Why does not a prophet arise among this great people, to lament over them, as did the seers of Judah over their degraded country? to tell them of their lapses and their wanderings, and to exhibit, in mighty and terrible visions, the judgements which

wait upon the ill-doings of nations? Yet, would the voice of an Isaiah be listened to on the Stock Exchange?. or would the pampered heart of aristocracy tremble at the accents of Ezekiel?

No: there are men in England who could accomplish this work, if it were to be done on a sudden. But this may not be. A change of institutions is necessary; and this change cannot take place without an alteration in the mind of the country. To this reform of thought and feeling it is not likely that England will arrive, until she has been taught by much sorrow, been disciplined into wisdom by suffering, and learnt to listen to the voices of the teachers,—of such men as Wordsworth and Coleridge, and, in another way, Chalmers,—who for years have been speaking to those that will not hear, and uttering truth to those that will not understand. What immediate change can be hoped for, when, even in the appointed places of education, the same profuse expenditure is observed, as is seen through all the rest of England, making it necessary for every one in the upper and middling classes to think of scarce anything but the means of gain. From these institutions men come into the world with habits of luxury, which are the curse of their future years, and which often make their lives one long struggle of expense and anxiety, display and misery.

The evil does not reside in the want or in the

superfluity of wealth, but in the inequality of its distribution. It is easy to refer this, as is so commonly and so vaguely done, to the influence of civilization, and to look no further. But if, as is no doubt the case, the division of labour and the progress of the arts tend to produce this result, wherefore should artificial institutions increase the evil? Wherefore should the laws of inheritance be such as to perpetuate a moral mischief of the most lamentable kind? such as to make the few rich, and the many poor, and thereby establish laws of opinion, which lead the many to drudge away their lives in seeking to gain the same level as the few? And,—though it may be said that this can act but upon a small part of the community, and must leave the vast majority in the condition which they are found to exhibit elsewhere,—yet, be it remembered, that the persons on whom it does act, are the very class among whom exist in all countries the seeds and promise of national improvement,—that those whom these laws debase, and consign to lives of greediness and ostentation, are the strength and heart of the country; that it is from the aristocracy and the largest instructed classes immediately below them, and especially acted upon by aristocratical ambition,—that it is from them we ought to expect everything for the education of the body of the people. When you degrade the gentry into machines for accumulation and votaries of luxury, and make them alter-

nately misers and spendthrifts, you do almost all that is possible for destroying the best hopes of England; you do all that man can do to prevent the existence of men, who, with that freedom from manual labour, which is necessary for the highest cultivation of the faculties, would also have those moderate and self-denying habits, which are indispensable to the growth of virtue; all that is possible to deprive the people of moral teachers, and to quench for ever the light of wisdom. It illuminated the humble study of Milton, and brightened the page of Harrington. Shall it now gleam only amid the mountains of Westmoreland, and scarce be known to any one but some unregarded FRIEND?

IV.

ENGLISH SOCIETY.

THE English are in many respects a fine people, and in almost all a singular people; but they are a very disagreeable people. Their singularity is evident in nothing more than this, that I can tell them how rude, awkward, and stupid they are, and be liked the better for it; as it seems to them that any one must be a wonderfully clever man, who can detect a fault in England or Englishmen, and a very considerable personage to venture to tell it. Their unfitness for social intercourse may be judged of from their universal unpopularity, except where their money has purchased reluctant favour.

The foundation of their character is pride; not that self-reliance, which makes men deal with the world openly and familiarly, as fearing nothing from its utmost power, and standing superior to it, and on that very account mingling in it with unhesitating and unsuspicious kindliness; but the jealous and sullen temper, which is perpetually in dread of hostility and insult; which for ever retreats, and for ever shows its teeth, where there is no enemy pursuing. Englishmen in society are wheels revolving one slow and dreary round, and bristled all over with spikes, which only fit into each other for the purpose of tearing up

between them all free and pleasant intercourse. Sulk, sulk, sulk, is the grand constituent of acquaintance in this country; and the native keeps his better humour, like his slippers, for the winter fire-side, or, like his shooting-jacket, for the autumn woods. At other times he not only breathes sulk, feels sulk, eats and drinks sulk,—which would be exclusively his own loss; but he also looks sulk at every one he meets, and wraps himself in a mantle of sulk to keep off the hands of his neighbours.

A native of any other country is pleased at the civility which addresses itself to him, even without an introduction. He appreciates the courtesy, which takes for granted that he is a reasonable and good-humoured being. An Englishman feels insulted if we mistake him for anything but a bear, and growls at any chance associate who may suppose him to be a featherless biped, instead of a quadru-pawed monster. Yet we may see that there is a kernel of kindness within this rough shell; for though he abhors all intercourse with strangers, that is, with people whose names, parentage, and fortunes, he is not acquainted with, as it might molest his dignity, and bring him for half-an-hour into company with some one a quarter of an inch lower than himself on the social ladder, yet he will readily pat a dog on the head, or throw it the leavings on his plate, when he has satisfied himself, provided always he

be not a hypochondriac, and that the intimacy with the animal does not make it necessary to open his lips to its owner.

In England there is no society, properly so called; for people never meet together to derive pleasure from each other's company. The serious business of life is all a contest and a rivalry; and the same spirit runs throughout those of their hours of leisure which are spent in public. Something is always superinduced upon the assembling together of friends or acquaintances, by which wealth may be exhibited; music, or feasting, or revelry of some kind or other, in which nothing is wanting but the spirit of enjoyment. A Frenchman uses his money to buy with it something which he desires; a Spaniard, to show his indifference to such beggarly considerations; a German, to satisfy his wants; an Italian, to enjoy the novelty; an Irishman, to get rid of the incumbrance; a Scotchman, to gain more in return; but an Englishman spends it to show he has it. If no one can deny that an entertainment has cost a large sum, and that the arrangements were all of the best description, it never occurs to him to consider whether his guests were amused. And he is in the right. They did not come to be amused, but to see their own importance reflected in the surrounding splendour.

The English are the nation of Europe whose institutions the least impede their playing the

fool: but they are restricted in every action of life by the tyranny of opinion; and therefore, when fashion has permitted the slightest aperture in the usual walls, the pent-up extravagances, *qua data porta, ruunt;* and, as, for instance, in the taste for overrunning the Continent, *insequitur clamorque virûm, stridorque rotarum.* The English are good friends; yet, so much is the fear of being connected with poverty in the eyes of the world stronger than friendship, that, if an Englishman were to appear in the streets of London with an old coat on, I am persuaded that three out of four of his acquaintances would refuse to acknowledge him, unless it were in a very private place indeed; and then they probably would fear the sparrows on the house-tops, lest "a bird of the air should carry the matter."

I will not venture to assert that there are not essential national distinctions, independent of circumstances and institutions, or that this kind of pride is not among the unalterable peculiarities of Englishmen; but I am certain that their institutions immeasurably aggravate the evil. The combined influences of wealth and aristocracy make it possible, though difficult, for every man to obtain the highest stations in the country, not by unaided genius or wisdom indeed, but by servility and riches. Every man therefore is occupied in pushing himself up, and keeping those below him down. A Spanish peasant will un-

hesitatingly stop the Duke of Medina-Celi on the Prado of Madrid, to light his cigar at that of the first grandee in the kingdom. An English professional man looks askance at a tradesman; and a peer turns his back upon a merchant. All this is of course immensely modified in serious concerns, by the comparative equality of the laws between man and man, and by the power over opinion which the freedom of the press gives to the middle classes. But it prevails to the fullest extent I have described in all on which depends the hourly comfort of life; and it tyrannizes over every feeling which we bring into social intercourse, and which ought, above all, to be left open to the influence of unlimited courtesy and charity. In these matters the English leave the flowers to the French, to be distilled into rose-water, and strew their own path with the thorns, and then, while their feet are sore and bleeding, affect to ridicule their transmarine neighbours, for being "perfumed like milliners," and "talking like waiting gentlewomen."

Other nations are commonly more goodhumoured and agreeable in society; because they feel within themselves a living spirit of mutual gratification. An Englishman is not a gregarious, but a solitary animal; and, when he tumbles into a crowd, it is either to get out of it again as fast as possible, or to improve the occasion into a means of crawling a step upwards from his actual

situation, or, as is oftener the case than either, to remain where he is, because he is too awkward and ashamed to do as he pleases, for fear it should be odd or vulgar. And so, to escape being vulgar, he stays among people to whom he shows the vulgarest of all qualities, stupidity, namely, and rudeness. In short those who individually are often among the prime of their species, are often socially the most imbecile and incapable of men.

See a mixed company of Englishmen and foreigners. There are two persons in the middle discussing the merits of Mademoiselle Mars; the one is a Parisian, all admiration for the Diamond, which he expresses with lively extravagance: the other is an Italian, talking with a full tide of impassioned feeling in support of the acting in his own country. The Frenchman delivers his philosophical jokes and comic sublimities, and, when he knows he has no longer anything brilliant to say, turns away to utter a panegyric on sensations and materialism, in opposition to a German. Then shall you see his eye-brows working even more vehemently than before, and his tongue delivering still more rapidly a fluent torrent of compliments to France, compliments to his adversary, compliments to himself, all garnished and exalted with the names and doctrines of *philosophes*. He is arguing perhaps to prove that all our feelings are of the same nature as

those we entertain for a *pâté de perigord.* Something occurs to make him think of war and politics; and then come *la patrie* and *la gloire*, and all the other second-hand embroidery of a Frenchman's dress-coat. In the mean time the poor German, half wanting words, and half stunned by the rapid and ingenious absurdity of his adversary, attempts to wait patiently, and, like the clown in Horace, *expectat dum defluat amnis*, and with the same result; till at last his convictions stir within him too strongly to be quieted, and he speaks, in defence of truth, good, beauty, and the Deity, with all the energy and earnestness of inspiration. On the other hand the Spaniard is declaiming, with the fluency of the Frenchman, and the strong indignation of the German, tempered by a certain dignity of his own, against the calumnies of General Foy, or Colonel Napier. There are perhaps a dozen foreigners; and all are animated and interested about something. If there are women in company, still better; for it is a duty as well as a pleasure to amuse a lady.

And all this time, who are those dreary persons, with high neckcloths, and hats in their hands, one of whom stands in each corner of the room, like Demogorgon in the *Prometheus Unbound*, surrounded as it were with rays of darkness? They are the English part of the company; and the only one of them who has opened his lips, is

a rubicund little clergyman, with a most insinuating smirk, properly exalted by professional gravity, who thought himself called upon *ex officio*, when he heard the Frenchman talking infidelity, to expound to him, in a Camo-Gallic stutter, the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles. Not being a particularly brilliant debater, he was by no means inclined to submit his belief to argument; and, when he had said exactly the opposite of what he meant, he retreated to his corner.

This is of course an exaggeration; and in all that goes before, I have been dwelling rather upon the peculiarities of society in this country, than upon society as it is. I have therefore omitted to describe what it has in common with the social intercourse of other countries. I have seen much of ostentatious, and something of real hospitality, and have discovered, beneath the rough and dirty upper crust, a mine of at least as much substantial good as can be found elsewhere. The great aristocracy is probably the best of great aristocracies; that is, the first nobles of England are probably not quite so ignorant and so debauched as those of Russia. Yet on the whole they are an unhappy class, whose influence does considerable harm to English society. They never treat those below them in rank and wealth with tolerable civility, but when they are perfectly secure against the slightest assumption of equality; and the trem-

bling reverence of ordinary Englishmen for a title or a great estate supplies daily and stimulating food to the worst propensities of these exalted personages.

People of distinguished family, large possessions, and great political power, having nothing to do, (except to carry on the Government,) may be as indolent and aimless as they please. They have privileges and splendour enough to exempt them from the necessity of seeking respect by the cultivation of their natural faculties. From these two causes it is, that the fashionable tone and manner are those of utter and careless indifference, and the fashionable subjects of conversation none but the most frivolous and transitory. The same effect is promoted by the exhausting anxieties, with which the mind of every man below the highest class is worn, through the necessity of struggling and agonizing for wealth. To the lawyer or the merchant no relaxation is agreeable, except those which either rouse him out of his listlessness by the most violent excitements, or permit him to indulge it by the most complete repose. The higher classes have too little to do, the middle too much; and both circumstances combine to render the pursuits of men in society utterly trivial and worthless.

There is no civilized country in which there is so little social intercourse between men and

women. So much the worse for the men. English women are on the whole the best portion of the sex. Ignorant as too many of them are of moral principles, there is among them less of ignorance and immorality than among those of other countries. Yet Englishmen commonly prefer to their society the talking by the hour the petty details of politics; for the principles of politics, being held as long ago settled, never receive the slightest attention. This is not wonderful; for to exist is so difficult a matter with an Englishman, that he never considers in what way it is best and pleasantest to live.

All this however being true, (and I am persuaded that it is true in substance, though perhaps too broadly and generally expressed,) it is nevertheless certain that an immense deal of good is to be found in Britain, compared with the state of the foremost continental kingdoms. Politically, professionally, and as a member of a sect or a class, an Englishman thinks himself entitled to be a rascal. A French *avocat* is noted and almost infamous, if he defends a cause which is obviously a bad one. His profession and the public will not excuse him for supporting injustice by chicanery. An English barrister would be talked of as a madman for refusing a brief, merely because it called upon him to maintain the wrong. An English divine may support a political opinion most strenuously till he is forty years of age,

and then uphold the direct contrary for the sake of gaining a bishopric, without thereby incurring any public disapprobation. An English statesman may take the utmost credit to himself for some measure of reform, and pledge himself to carry it through by his most strenuous exertions. The next day he shall rise in the House of Commons, and propose some alteration of the intended remedy, which will introduce an evil of the same kind as it was designed to cure, and one ten times worse in degree. And this personage will perhaps conclude his speech by a panegyric on his own honesty, which the Legislature will applaud, and the nation believe in. Yet all these men, the Barrister, the Bishop, and the Secretary of State, are perhaps in private life distinguished for integrity, for benevolence, for family affection. Morality does exist as a great recognised moving power in the very heart of the country: and, be its triumph soon or late, it must at one time or other overthrow those wretched tyrannies, the spirit of sectarianism, and the interests of classes.

V.

THE ENGLISH PERIODICAL PRESS.

THE English Press is the most powerful literary engine in Europe, as it is also the freest. It has absorbed nine-tenths of the minds of this country. The being of an Englishman has no great cycle, which it would accomplish between the cradle and the grave: its longest revolution is performed between the quarterly publications of a review; and this comprises various minor periods, each complete in itself,—monthly, weekly, tridiurnal, and daily. Pamphlets find no sale in the land of Swift and Steele. Metaphysics, political economy, and cookery, are discussed in the reviews and magazines; and all the thinking of the country has become a matter of shreds and patches. Truth and science are things of trimestral immortality: the noblest subjects, "which the gods love," "die young" in monthly magazines; and the mind of the nation is amused and kept awake by a succession of little excitements, a constant buzz, and a petty titillation. Great libraries sleep amid their dust, while newspapers are worn to bits by the successive fingers of a hundred readers. These flying sheets, the true pinions of rumour, are borne upon the breeze to every corner and outskirt of society; and myriads, who have never dreamed of any principles,

to which to refer facts, and by which to interpret them, are saturated and overwhelmed with details, and opinions, and thoughts not born of reason, and feelings which are fancies, the produce and stock-in-trade of the present hour. We live, not in the duration of time, but amid a succession of moments. There is no continuous movement, but a repetition of ephemeral impulses: and England has become a mighty stockbroker, to whom ages past and future are nothing, and whose sole purpose and taste is to watch the news. I will make some observations about each of the individual literary ministers to this propensity. And first of those which are least so, the Quarterly Reviews.

The EDINBURGH REVIEW has for many years received contributions from several of the most celebrated men in England. There seems however to be in the mind of the editor a great want of any connecting or fusing power, which might have given unity to the work. It is full from beginning to end of gross inconsistencies and contradictions, and, above all, of discrepancies in principles. Its grounds however are generally fair and just; and on the whole it would probably give a more accurate notion of modern English literature, and a higher standard of ability and knowledge, than any of its contemporaries. The wit of Sidney Smith, the fancy of Jeffrey, the grave sense and large acquirements of Mackintosh,

the manly plainness and zeal for education of Brougham, and the cultivated acuteness of the lamented Mr. Horner, render its former numbers both agreeable and permanently instructive. Yet we can now but ill conceive the impression it must have produced, when the glitter of its rapier and the sound of its trumpet first scared the infant senses of the nineteenth century. It is now a changed book. An article on German Literature appeared not long ago in its pages, which regularly attacked half the doctrines its editor has been promulgating for a quarter of a century. It is now devoted almost exclusively to politics. Its speculations on these subjects are a fair and flourishing tree, but with little root beneath, and hollowness at the core. For their opinions are entirely drawn from the outward phenomena, which it is desired to change and remedy; as if they believed that there were really some truth in the old remedy of the *crinis canis rabidi*. Though their politics be on the whole far wiser than those of any other of the great Reviews, they have scarcely ever shown a disposition to establish, in the first place, what is the idea which the nation they address should seek to realize; and it is not wonderful that they err with regard to details and expedients, which they have no standard to measure, and no light to guide.

The QUARTERLY REVIEW is more various, more amusing, and far more mischievous. I do

not mean on account of its political lucubrations, which, but for the disgusting malignity which has marked them until lately, would be merely absurd and contemptible; but because a good deal of miscellaneous reading and agreeable composition is made use of for the purpose of discrediting all attempts at human improvement, of oppressing free inquiry, of supporting class and sectarian prejudices and monopolies, of teaching the world that the business of life is hatred and persecution, of repressing all the feelings that would make us love man because he is our brother, and God because He is our Father,—of looking with the angry strictness of inquisitors, whether the nature of other men has precisely the same form as our own, whether they worship God after another fashion from ourselves. Yet it is curious that even this work has been considerably improved of late years; and though Mr. Southey still raves in defence of Laud, as if a Poet-Laureate were a bedlamite or a bishop, the modern politics of the Review are exceedingly ameliorated; and some of the critical articles, commonly attributed to Mr. Lockhart, are more valuable contributions to critical science,—to a catholic philosophy of literature,—than have ever before appeared in an English periodical. If this gentleman will but go on, having with him, as he has, talents, time, reputation, and such an engine to make these available as *the Quarterly Review*, he may be one

of the greatest benefactors to his native country that its literature has ever known.

The third of the Reviews is in public estimation little more than a kind of unmeaning *tertium quid;* something that does very well to "redress the balance" of Quarterly criticism, but without any value of its own. In fact it can be interesting only to politicians and economists of one sect; one whose doctrines are as difficult for the crowd, as they are disagreeable to the most distinguished thinkers of our, and of every age. Their system is a pure theory,—that is, it makes the ordinary convictions of mankind go for absolutely nothing: at the same time it only emancipates itself from fact for the sake of depraving philosophy. It takes a fragment of humanity, and substitutes it for the whole; and the part which it selects to be crowned with glory and honour, is precisely the very dregs. It melts the ore, not to extract the metal, but the dross, and then pretends that it supplies us with a perfect specimen of the native mineral. Some men of pure and sublime affections have vainly endeavoured to see in man only the breath of the nostrils of God, and have turned away their eyes from the clay it animates. Some, a few, the wisest, and generally, if not always, the best, have comprehended the whole of our being, and have weighed with an impartial hand the higher faculties of humanity, without omitting the dust in the balance. But it is reserved for

the philosophy of sensation and Utility, to omit in its estimate of man whatever is nobler and more consoling, to measure only our baser propensities, to study the earth of which we are compounded, and the blood and tears with which it is kneaded and to deny the existence of that diviner spirit, which is the life and essence of the whole, but which escapes their bungling tools and awkward processes.

Of the magazines, the NEW MONTHLY is edited by a man of perhaps more peculiarly delicate taste than any other in England. If his mind fail at all, it is in want of strength and decided character; and the magazine reflects the man. There are in it no bold views, and, except in a few papers of Mr. Campbell's own, no extensive acquirements; but letters and journals of travellers in Greece, Italy, or Switzerland, lives of French barristers, and sketches of society,—very sketchy indeed,—together with, now and then, some pretty verses by Mrs. Hemans, make up the miscellany. It is a curious symptom of the spirit of the times, that such a book should have so large a popularity. Every one however can understand the whole of it; and it seldom contains an opinion that any one could dissent from. The appearance in its pages of vulgarisms of feeling about high life and about low, is not an objection for those who, from their being expressed with no vulgarism of language, never perceive their exist-

ence. There are many moments however in the life of all men, even of wise ones, when a page or two of *The New Monthly Magazine* would be a relief from lassitude, or from graver thoughts. But I would hint to its accomplished Editor, that, if he would trust more to the bent of his own mind, and less to the opinions of his publisher,—if he would diversify his work with serious and eloquent criticism on other books besides those which are the property of Mr. Colburn,—with philosophical and creative compositions, instead of furnishing a whole feast of side-dishes,—his book would contain enough for the mere sofa-readers, and would interest many persons who now treat it with utter disregard. The bias of its politics is certainly in favour of the improvement of the world; and it should not be forgotten, that in these pages appeared, from the pen of Mr. Campbell, the first suggestions of a London University,—the germ from which has proceeded an institution likely to do more towards strengthening and widening English education, than anything that has been heard of for a century.

BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE is a book of a bolder nature, with more of good and more of evil than can be attributed to its London rival. Nearly the most powerful papers that have ever appeared in any English magazine, are to be found in its volumes; and these in great numbers, and on a large range of subjects. It

deals almost always in exaggerated expression; but this has been in its literary articles the vestment of much high truth. There is certainly no English periodical work, the criticism in which is on the whole so original, profound, and eloquent, as that of *Blackwood's Magazine;* while there is no political work in Europe so entirely and shamelessly bad,—except perhaps the *Lisbon Gazette.* The latter department procures them popularity with all the classes and parties of the empire, which have any interest in the continuance of abuses. The former obtains the respect of the wise; and in both cases men turn away from the portion of the work which is not intended for them, and make little account of it, either for or against the book. If Dr. Philpotts cared about, or could comprehend philosophical criticism, he would be sorely puzzled by the articles on Shelley; and if Charles Lamb were to dip for an instant into that compound of Styx and Phlegethon, of mud and milk-and-water, which Mr. Blackwood entitles a political article, he would certainly be both frightened and hurt in a way sufficiently agitating to the nerves of *Elia.* The gross abuse of individuals, whom some writer in the magazine happens to dislike, is also exceedingly disagreeable. Mr. Hazlitt and Mr. Leigh Hunt have to answer unquestionably for enow of faults and follies; but they are both men of talent in their line; and the latter appears to

be an earnest, if not a successful lover of truth. Keats, whose memory they persevered only a few months back in spitting upon, was, as every one knows who has read him, among the most intense and delightful English poets of our day. But a certain portion of dirt and slander seems necessary in England to make the public endure any degree of philosophy, even in criticism; and it will be charitable to refer to the same policy the swinish cleverness of the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

The LONDON MAGAZINE has had three avatars. In the first it was a book, which on the whole would have been more pleasing to a lover of mankind and of truth, than any similar English publication. It contained many admirable critical and speculative papers, which are still well worth being referred to; and there was in it but little of that individual calumny and political corruption, which eat into and weaken our respect for *Blackwood*. It was here that the exquisite essays of Elia were published, and gained, as they merited, an almost universal admiration, by the gentle but perfect humour, the picturesque liveliness, the graceful and kindly affection for men and nature, which never were more beautifully or simply exhibited. *The London* next fell into the hands of persons, who, one would guess, were a set of indolent scoffers, too prudent to state their opinions plainly, too lazy to take much trouble in insinuating them cunningly, and yet too clever not to

furnish some amusement in the midst of their restrained discussions and careless gibes. But they filled three-fourths of their work with extracts; and most of the talent was in the single paper called *The Diary of the Month.* One sometimes encountered a sarcasm worthy of Bayle or Voltaire; but the writer had neither the omnigenous learning of the former, nor the self-supplying industry of the latter. The only point on which they spoke out with effect, was the law-abuses; and large, and sometimes ludicrous, as they are, they will not supply amusing matter for a monthly volume. The magazine is now a strange undigested mass,—in some papers excellent, in some very trivial, in many very foolish. The last number contained a valuable paper on *The Small-Note Bill;* and it has had several curious and able papers on the literary men of France.

The Monthly Magazine is less known than it deserves to be. It is very various and full of talent; and some sketches and tales on Italian subjects, which have appeared in its later numbers, exhibit a lighter and more lively touch than almost any writing of the day.

Of the GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE who shall speak, who does not wear spectacles, and is not as ancient as one of its own antiquities? A repertory of all things lost or mislaid between the Flood and the Conquest,—a strange museum

of obsolete knick-knacks,—a withered flower, which may have graced the bosom of my great-grandmother, a feather from the wing of Old Time, worn to the stump by inditing a hundred volumes,—a cypress-branch,—a lifeless but respectable and well-dressed mummy;—if not to these things, whereunto shall I liken *The Gentleman's Magazine?* As if one of that singular and fastidious breed called gentlemen ever read a line of its prim and dusty pages!

VI.

A MEDITATION AT NETLEY ABBEY.

THE first view is not very striking; grey ornamented walls, among green wood. The interior however is extremely interesting, especially one long roofless hall, with a large window at each end. A high and spacious building is thrown off from one side of this, like one of the arms of a cross, and is surrounded by two ranges of tall arches, one above the other. This is the most perfect and beautiful part of the edifice. Trees that appear the growth of a century are towering among the ruins, and replace with their foliage the roof which formerly shaded the building. These green and stately plants, and the thick creepers which enwreath and robe every pointed arch and slender column, and wrap the rough grey fragments of the walls now scattered over the whole area, have taken away all the rawness and soreness of recent desolation; and that nature, which manifests itself with so much glory in the heavens above, and the landscape around them, seems to press with her soft embrace, and hallow with her fresh beauty, these mouldering remains of art.

Yet the prevailing aspect of antiquity completely prevents us from thinking of the fabric, as of anything but the relic of an elder age. And this is well; for everything is salutary which unites us with the past, and teaches us to feel that

we do not stand isolated in the waste of time. It is good for us to contemplate our kind as connected through all its epochs, and knit into unity; and there is no better state of mind than that which revives and cherishes within us those generous and charitable, or serene, meditative strains of sentiment, which carry through all the centuries of history, as it were, one golden thread, one fresh rivulet, a single beam of happy light. I would not willingly persuade myself that there is no touch of natural affection in the kindly reverence with which we survey the handiwork, or muse among the sepulchres of preceding generations; and I have far more charity for Jew, Turk, or Pagan, than for him who would make me an enemy to the past, by proving that it is inimical to me. The person who would really destroy our veneration for the annals and legacies of our fathers, is he who attempts to make their wisdom a warrant for our folly; and who turns our respect and sympathy for the monuments of buried ages into gall and bitterness, by forcing us to dwell, like the maniacs, in the tombs. Such men bring the ancient days from the natural distance at which mankind are willing to worship them, and mix them up with the business and interests of the present. Our ancestors thought, planned, struggled, and conquered for themselves, and with reference to the circumstances of their era; and oftentimes they did so nobly and wisely. But

would that their graves would open and swallow the brawlers, who make the insignia of their free and sublime spirits to be collars of iron round our necks, and chains upon our hands! We are ready to honour their trophies; but why should we bear them like burthens on our backs? or wherefore should the crowns they won be turned into fools-caps for their children?

I love a ruin, wisely, but not too well. There are those who manifest the excess of their affection by measuring its area, and taking the altitude of its pinnacles. I would understand it, feel it, gaze upon it, even as I do now. The abbey, I believe, belonged to the Cistercians; and the horses of Cromwell's dragoons were afterwards stabled in its cloisters. These skeleton windows were probably once filled with gorgeous tints, with grotesque fiends and hoary martyrs. These aisles resounded with the pealings of white-robed choirs. Here was the solemn and burly abbot, and the dark files of cowled monks, and a vassal peasantry crowded together at awful distance from their holy superiors. And here too perhaps some neighbouring baron would resort, to atone, by occasional ten-fold devotion, for habitual contempt of friars, and violation of ecclesiastical canons. On some high festival, how would all these be lighted up and harmonized by a blaze of tapers, under the shadow of lofty and gloomy arches, into a rich perspective of bril-

liant and solemn colours, venerable forms, and awful symbols! while the deep tones of spiritual exhortation, and the exulting or imploring melodies of devotion, gave a purport and meaning and heavenward application to the whole. Then came the age when children loitered and clambered among the ruins of the monastery, and sheep fed quietly round broken images, and the defaced carved-work of the sanctuary; and so generations passed. And again, with what a confident joy must the decay of this noble fabric have been surveyed by the stern soldiers of the Commonwealth, while some highly-gifted and many-scarred trooper placed himself on a mass of the ruin, and holding the Bible in one hand, while he leaned with the other on his dinted broad-sword, expounded the advantages of those mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem, which the elect were destined to inherit, over these earthly tabernacles of Antichrist! till, warming with the beloved theme, amid the shattered buttresses and roofless aisles, he would lead the voices of the grim enthusiasts in a hymn of thanksgiving and triumph for the fall of Babylon the Great, and the overthrow of the high places of idolatry; and perhaps at last fling off cloak, belt, and cuirass, and toil at the lever and the mine to promote the work of desolation.

Scarcely a trace now remains, even to the gaze of fancy, by which we may guess at the details of

those means which gradually destroyed the fabric. All is now softened and made beautiful, and inspired with one consistent character and soul, by the overgrowth of luxuriant creepers. The green foliage of many soaring trees waves its dappled shadow over the walls and the weed-matted area; and the abbey, with its broken columns and crumbled ornaments, seems to have become a portion of universal nature, a graceful feature of a glorious countenance, an original member of the landscape in which it stands; born of the same mother and by the same generation, as the ivy which crowns the trees which overshadow, and the blue bright sky and eternal sun which illuminate and smile upon it. The massy grey stones look as if they had grown up, like the hills and woods, by some internal energy from the centre, and expanded themselves amid the co-operating elements into a pile of silent loveliness, a place of solemn and lonely meditation, fit for the quiet reveries of the idly active, or the high and various fancies of a poet.

This it may be to any one whose mind is capable of seeing more in a beautiful ruin than in a curious machine or a pretty toy,—anything more than an object to be looked at for half an hour, thought of for a minute, and talked about for a day. But to those whose conceptions and feelings mount higher even than poetry or speculation, Netley Abbey is a still more happy retreat; one abound-

ing in wealthier secrets, and instinct with more grateful and healthy contemplations. To him who thinks that there is a peculiar religion in temples, and that, where the carved work of the temple is, there must necessarily dwell the glory of the Shechinah, Netley was long ago desecrated by the silencing of its choir, the rending of its arches, the overthrow of its altar. But, if we know and feel that there are places of worship besides the church and the closet, and other perches for meditation than the cushion of a pulpit, then we shall find, amongst these broken remains, a soul still living under the ribs of death, perhaps as powerful and as religious as that which once inhabited their full-blown pomp. What finer moral breathes among the discourses spoken so often to careless ears, and the prayers that so many millions of times have been uttered by mechanical lips, than those thoughts which meet and detain us, and make around us a voiceless melody, in these dim and breezy courts? What more exquisite harmony between the deeds of God and of man, than those graceful and almost invisible blendings of art and nature, where the architecture, said to have been originally copied from the forest-paths, is now again assimilated to them, and mingled with and raised to the fresh and living beauty of its prototype? What more just and easy gradation from man to God than in the cemented lump of stone on

which we sit, the wild flower which springs from it, the bush by which it is clasped and shaded, and the tall ash which, rising above the columned buttresses, upswells to and waves amid the skies? These walls, methinks, are as the incomplete and perishable circuit of those peculiar forms and sectarian modes of religion, which we all are placed in during childhood, and to which we commonly cling through life with a fond and unreasoning, and sometimes a jealous and angry affection. The verdure, and foliage, and clinging fibres, and lofty stems image out that universal and inward faith, which gives to these their purport and beauty, life, power, and saving spirit. Sown by no human hand, springing up by the law of their own being, watered and fostered only by the skies, they clothe and crown these dead and mouldering works of man's contrivance, surround them with all loveliness, and fill them with strength and vitality,—make them a shrine, not alone for Benedictine or Cistercian, for Roman Catholic or Protestant, but for the unselfish and pious heart of all races, ages, sects, and circumstances,—and show that, let artificial fanes and marble altars remain or perish as they will, that influence of the Creative Son, that energy of the Logos, which made, and moves, and blesses the universe and the soul of man, will always open in the wilderness a fountain whereat we may quench our thirst, and rear up amid the ruins a temple holier than that made

with hands. Is it not indeed possible that these relics are an emblem of that fallen nature which built the structure? May it not be, that, like it, man once was an upright and goodly being, applied only to those aims for which he was framed and consecrated, admitting to his heart no employment but the offices of prayer and praise; and yet that, when this perfection was overthrown and decayed, there remained the seeds of feelings so pure and aspiring and spiritual, as may enable us to rise higher and nearer towards the source and centre of love, than the point at which we stood in the freshness of our race? The work of purification may leave the gold more precious, than if it had never been debased by the worthless alloys of its ore. But,

Now dewy twilight o'er these shattered walls
  Breathes from the closing eyelids of the skies;
The blessed night, with starry influence, falls
  O'er carv'd remains, and boughs that heavenward rise;
  The healing gentleness of evening sighs
From arch to arch, and thrills the slumbering trees;
  And, like the memory of dead centuries,
The shadows stride before the lingering breeze.
The pinions of the heavens, with fleckered gloom,
  Enfold the world, and the adoring earth
To all religion; here there is no tomb,
  But holy promise of that second birth,
When o'er man's ruin Beauty shall return,
And perfect Love shall light his funeral urn.

VII.

THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

JULY 1.—The road from London to Portsmouth is in general very beautiful. The day too was fine. I saw a view from a hill (called, I think, Hind Head) which struck me as particularly interesting and English. It embraces an immense extent of country, all apparently rich and highly cultivated. The surface flows, as it were, into a thousand forms of undulating elegance, and was coloured all over with innumerable varieties of green, marked here and there by shifting lights, and magnificently embroidered with tufted hedgerows. A slight haze gave an additional softness to the whole, like a delicate veil, and connected the extremities of the prospect with the light clouds of the horizon. I was surprised in many parts of the journey to see so much of heath. It completely overspread several commons which we passed; and some hills were beautifully purple, except a few intervening patches of brilliant green.

After passing into the town through several lines of fortification, I went to the Dockyard. It contains, besides many other vessels, a 120 gun-ship on the stocks. The ribs of a great ship with-the planking are, in my mind, more striking than the perfect vessel. There are no details to fritter away the feeling of awe; and the huge elaborate

mass of timber lies before you in all the beauty of its swelling and unbroken lines, yet solid and vast as the skeleton of a world, the bone and strength, as we might well believe, of a magnificent and irresistible being. After looking at the ships, I went to the forge, where I saw the mode of making anchors. Except the assistance of a crane, for supporting the immense iron bar, and moving it out from or into the fire, the whole labour is that of human hands. The dim workshop, a very large room, is filled with heaps of iron, burning furnaces, great black bellows, and gangs of men, pale with their hot toil, labouring incessantly in the glare of the fires, and under the beams, pullies, and chains which are stretched beneath the roof, all sable with accumulated smoke. After the enormous column of metal was swung out of the fire, with one end in a glow, and almost in a blaze, ten or a dozen men surrounded it, and began hammering it with all their strength, each striking in his turn a blow which would prostrate the stoutest knight that ever wore an iron helmet. The largest anchors weigh four tons and a half. These are manufactured by gangs, or knots, of sixteen men, of whom two are foremen, and do not use the hammer. This number of workmen makes an anchor of the above size in five weeks. All that is done by the sixteen could, I imagine, be done by two, with the aid of machinery. I afterwards saw some mechanism worked by steam,

which cut in lengths copper bars of an inch diameter as easily as I cut a cigar. I was then taken to the block manufactory, the instruments of which are the celebrated invention of Brunell. It is very neat and in beautiful order, but disappointed me; not because, as Mr. De Roos seems to insinuate, it is complicated, but because the greater part of it is not only quite simple, but also quite common. There are very few parts of the process which are anything more than the neat application of good tools; for, though the motion is all supplied by a steam-engine of, I think, thirty horse-power, every operation is guided by the hand of a workman.

There is a ship in the yard, designed to take out convicts to Bermuda,—the kingdom of Prospero, the home of Miranda. O, Shakspere! Shakspere! that thy fancy should be outraged by a Secretary for the Home Department!

After seeing the mast-house, and the rope-walk for making cables, which last is a room said to be 360 yards long, I took boat in the harbour, and went to see the *Victory*, of 100 guns, on board of which Lord Nelson was shot. It is in admirable order, and, they say, excellent condition. The lower deck guns are out. There is a plate of copper on the spot of the deck where that all-daring heart was smote, that all-conceiving head laid low, that burning spirit quenched. To see the very plank on which he stood and fell, helps a little to bring home to us the bodily pre-

sence and omnipotent glance of that most energetic of God's creatures. There is now only one man in the ship's company, a black, who was in it at the time. There is too much about the vessel of the frivolous neatness of a Dutch villa, to let it be very interesting. But I doubt not it can show its teeth on occasion, and be dangerous enough. The town, which contains so much to gratify reasonable curiosity, and excite no vulgar admiration, is dirty and disagreeable; just the place in the ruins of which our descendants will discover the fossil remains of pig-tail tobacco, salt junk, red herrings, and gin-barrels, with numberless other relics of that strangest of amphibious monsters, an English seaman.

I went aboard a small boat, and sailed to Ryde. The sea was quite smooth, and beautiful as ever. Several vessels, some of them large, were scattered over it, like flowers on a grass-plat; and it was bounded in front by the green shores of the Isle of Wight. One never seems to be so much among the number of Nature's intimates, as when one is sailing on a gentle sea. The white sail, which moves before the wind, and bears us over the waters, connects us in friendship with the very elements, and brings us into a kindly dependence upon them. The waves look as if they sparkled with pleasure round the bow; and in the wake, which bears the impress of our

course, we leave a pleasant recollection behind us. From the pier I saw the sun setting in great beauty. Two broad masses of rose-coloured vapour, so broken as to look perfectly airy and delicate, spread away from his disk like the outstretched wings of an arch-angel, and covered the third part of the heavens. They melted off at the edges into the deep transparent blue of the sky, and seemed gently brooding over the darker smoothness of the sea, which reflected a more faint and wavering image of their brilliancy. The track of a boat moving across the inverted picture of this radiance was peculiarly beautiful. It left for a moment a narrow, polished band of shifting colours, red, golden, purple, and emerald, a rainbow in the waters, a path of splendour like that which would follow the wheels of Amphitrite. It was gradually dissolved in the heavings of the waters; and this momentary revelation of the treasured jewels of the deep was lost again for ever. After a minute of softer beauty, the cloudy pinions of the great cherub became a magnificent crimson, and again deepened to imperial purple, till the lifeless grey of twilight obscured their glory. The sound of the waves, which seemed to roll through, and to speak of infinity, came murmuring and sweet into my chamber, and visited my sleep.

July 2.—I walked in the evening, to a village

a few miles distant from Ryde, upon the shore. The beach is very beautiful, patches of rock dividing broad sands, so smooth and elastic, they seemed strewed for the dances of sea-fairies. These are bounded by slopes of thick wood, which at high tides must be washed by the waves. The inland road winds over uneven ground, with high and broken hedge-rows on each hand, opening occasionally to views of rich green hills, with cattle and cottages; and, on the other side, of the glittering sea, studded with sails, and limited by the varied outline of the Hampshire coast. Would I were the Sancho of this better Barrataria! I saw the sunset through a screen of elms: it was a lake of melted topaz and ruby, which gleamed soft and broken among the thick green leaves. Such must have been the glimpses of Paradise which shone through the gate to the disconsolate Peri. After a time this was succeeded by the great horns of the moon showing red above a hill, which, like the sky, was dim and shadowed. In walking along the shore to-day, east of Ryde, I saw a patch of grass close to the sands, on which are a great many small mounds, marking the spots in which the seamen of the Royal George were buried. There was a little pool close by, left there by the tide, in which two or three children were sailing their mimic ships. I find the following verses in the journal from which these notes are extracted.

The hundreds that the deep sea whelm'd, when heaven
Shone blue above, and storms were far away,—
Who sank, though by no rock their ship was riven,
And died with Kempenfelt in this fair bay:
Here lie their bones from out the waters grey
Cast forth,—brave men who passed from life unshriven,
And here are mingled with no hallowed clay:
Think ye their sins for this are unforgiven?

The grass untrod waves o'er their mounds,—the breeze
Wildly laments, and on the neighbouring strand
Breaks the hoarse voice of the remorseful seas.
Theirs are no tombs upreared by human hand:
But better with their fate yon main agrees,
Than stateliest monument by sculptor planned.
Mourner and epitaph, the billows moan
Sweeps ever near them; and at autumn eve
The gusty east-winds with unearthly tone
Wail round them, and the listening ear deceive,
Like sighs the sinful heart in death that leave,
Or strange and sad as wandering spirits groan.
Yet sounds than these more awful still shall cleave
Ocean and earth, and make the world their own.
When that great herald's voice shall burst the skies,
And peal in thunder round the shuddering sphere,
And rend the myriad graves, and say, *Arise!*
To all the born of woman, these shall hear,
And side by side shall stand with him who lies
In marble vaults and fills a gilded bier.

July 5.—I went with a party who would have made a much duller place agreeable, to see the grounds of a seat on a headland at the east of the island. They stretch for a long way above the sea, with merely a steep wooded bank between them and the waves. There is a profusion of beautiful trees, particularly immense magnolias

and myrtles; and a delightful walk through a shrubbery, which covers a narrow point, running out a considerable distance into the sea. From this there are many breaks and openings, which show the wide waters in great perfection; and from a seat at the end of it you look on one side along the green and bending cliffs of the island, and over the bright straits starred with small bright sails to the coast of Hampshire. On the other hand is Brading Harbour, with its pretty village, teeming cultivation, and white sandy shore; and beyond, the ocean rolls away to glimmer against the distant sky.

July 6.—Came to Newport, and was much pleased with the view of some of the richly wooded and gentle hills, which are visible from the road. There is an appearance of neatness and comfort, and even of a certain rustic untheatrical elegance, about the poorest cottages, which is extremely delightful. This must necessarily be connected with some good moral and intellectual qualities.

> Goodly thou art, in this thy king-like clay,
> O glorious country! richest on the earth
> In precious deeds and thoughts, and in the birth
> Of soaring intellects, and in the array
> Of antique story, and in wisdom gray,
> And many a fountain of no sensual mirth:
> Nor of deep-hearted feelings hast thou dearth,
> And aspirations all unborn of clay.

Carisbrook Castle is only a mile from Newport, and, when near it, I turned away from the high

road up a green lane, one of the most picturesque and bowery I ever saw. The trees, all the way along, meet overhead; and the light flowed through them dim and checquered, in a thousand tints of sunny green, or soft and mellow grey. The castle is of large extent, tolerably preserved, and draped with a good deal of ivy. But the want of great height prevents it from bearing that look of indomitable command, which in some cases makes an ancient fortress resemble the last of the Anakim, bidding defiance to the feebler race that crawl around its feet. The view from the top of the keep is pretty and cheerful, without any peculiar wildness or extreme beauty, beyond that of the slightly broken country, quiet and varied verdure, and happy-looking dwellings. I was shown the window through which Charles I. is said to have tried to escape. I wish he had succeeded: for even now, when there is any talk of innovation, his death is *Lapis offensionis et petra scandali* in the eyes of the foolish; while the termination of the contest on the 29th of May could not in any circumstances have been more unhappy than it was. I have seen these verses designed as an inscription for this part of the castle.

'Mid these fallen stones and weeds luxuriant stood
The narrow prison of a man of blood.
Would that till now the dungeon had remained,
To mark the fate for sceptred crime ordained!

When those strong spirits, from whose loins we spring,
Gave guilt its meed, nor spared a felon king;
Blot to his age, and traitor to the land
That owned his sway, cold heart, and ruthless hand;
Who fed his pride on priestcraft's fawning breath,
While glorious Eliot pined away to death;
Who prayed while those his mandate tortured sighed,
And called on Heaven to witness,—when he lied!
False friend! dishonest foe! the thorny rod,
To bruise a sinful people sent by God!
Ay, here, in impotence of selfish wrath,
He strode the floor till he had worn a path;
And through yon bars with fruitless longing pored
On that fair land, still reeking from his sword.
Long has he joined the herd of princely knaves,
Who rot like beggars, though in trophied graves:
His deeds, his race, his dungeon, and his power,
All that was his, alike has had its hour;
All but the shame of crimes he wrought or urged,
Eternal warnings to the land he scourged!

I threw my general impressions of the place into the following lines:

ON CARISBROOK CASTLE.

The storm-beat towers that many an age
Mocked at feudal warfare's rage,
Buttress, keep, and battlement,
All with feeble eld o'erspent,
Weary, tottering, and hoary,
Now in grey and quiet glory
Rest from the toils that crowd their story.

Here no longer now endures
The frown of threatening embrasures:
Every loop-holed wall decaying,
Every turret earthward swaying,

All their ancient warrior state,
Bridge, portcullis, foss, and gate,
Broken now and desolate.

Here the beacon faggots nigh,
Piled to blaze against the sky,
Gleams no more the flickering brand,—
And no more the warder's eye
Bends its eager straining look,
O'er the battle-shaken land,
From the heights of Carisbrook.

But the ivy's freshest hue
Wreathes in green each mouldering tower;
And where cannon wont to lower,
There the wild ash struggles through.
So of old the war-worn knight,
His manhood spent in toil and fight,
March, and siege, and ambuscade,
Joust, and foray, and crusade,
Unlaced the helm his brows had borne
Through half an age in peril's scorn,
And bade the daughter of his love
In earliest summer's breezy hours
Crown his white locks with dew-fed flowers,
And green bowers of the grove.

Here, where once the trumpet-blast
Like a threat so oft hath past,
And hundreds thronged in steel array
'Mid the red light of parting day,
Now the silent wind is stealing,
And the rapid swallow wheeling;
Now the sheep unheeded stray,
And lisping children laugh and play,
Where the clanging shield and spear
Crashed in the tournament's career.

No cannon's roar, no bolts that tell
The terrors of the mangonel,

Disturb the swan whose lonely whiteness
Gems like a pearl yon small lake's brightness.
No sound of tumult or of fear
Rouses the muser's lazy ear;
Nought save the light melodious chime,
That thrills the air of morning's prime,
From yon grey church-tower wandering here.

'Tis peaceful all; and he who ne'er
Had heard its destiny and tale,
Nor knew that serfs of old grew pale
To see their tyrant Baron's lair,
That death has held his carnival
While armies mustered round its wall,
And that through many a month's long round
A despot here his dungeon found,—
Were these untold, we well might deem
The ruined fortress but a dream,
Shaped from the morning mists that veil
The weary stars retreating pale;
Or clouds that float, half shade, half gleam,
In the round moon's wavering beam;
Or from the vapours delicate
That gird the sunset's glorious state;
Or from out that airier woof
Visioned far from earth aloof,
When the heart creates a sphere
Than this clay-built orb more dear,
And amid the etherial dome
Makes a loved ideal home.

The road onward from Newport leads below the knoll on which Carisbrook stands. It looks much more striking from a little distance, than when you are in it. Seen from this road, it is a very beautiful and venerable object. It has none of the vulgar butcherly look of a modern fortress, but seems a high residence for high-

thoughted men. The prospects before and behind and on both sides of the way, for several miles from Newport, are very pretty; particularly those to the right, which let in, over a green and teeming foreground, the broad arm of the sea whereby the island is divided from Hampshire, together with the rich line of the opposite shore bounding the distance, all embroidered and chequered with wood, and studded with gleaming buildings of white. After the first five or six miles, the country becomes more barren; and the way lies along the bottom of a range of uncultivated downs. Near Freshwater it again becomes woody and comfortable. About ten miles from Newport I went into a cottage to ask my road; and, besides getting good counsel on this point, I was well rewarded in another way; for the cleanness and beauty of the lowly apartment were quite delightful. There were only two middle-aged women in it, plaiting straw, and a little child. Neither the cottage, nor the people were lifted out of their class. But a certain fire-side fondness for home, and decent self-respect manifested themselves in everything around them. They are better worth showing to a foreigner, than Regent-Street, or Portsmouth, or a Manchester manufactory, or a Westminster election.

My destination was Freshwater Gate, which I reached about five o'clock. It is a small inn

close to the sea. I walked on the shore, while my dinner was preparing, and found myself in a beautiful bay, surrounded by cliffs of chalk, and bending off at one extremity into other sweeps of coast, which show promontory beyond promontory to some distance. At one side of this bay there are two rocks standing in the sea, and looking picturesque. At the other the chalk is broken into innumerable fragments; and, after creeping through a passage or two at the base of the cliff, you find yourself under an archway in the precipice, through which you look over an unbounded extent of sea. A little farther on, and from among these natural grottoes the eye travels along a considerable range of varied cliff, running off towards the Needles. The sun was shining bright; and the gentle swell of the sea rolled to my feet with a pleasant and quiet murmur. The distance was faintly marked by two or three ill-defined sails. I saw this view again for a long time in the evening under the light of a full moon, darkened by no cloud, which seemed to strew a broad pathway over the waters with the yellow locks of a myriad of sporting Nereids. It was among these caverns that I thought of the stanzas below.

The cliffs that rise in stately show
To rampart thee, thou fairy land,
How calm they hear the ocean's flow,
And shade with solemn brows the strand!

They have a quiet joy to meet
The gentle murmur of the waves,
That pleased embrace their aged feet,
And play and laugh around their caves.

The deep blue main and sportful foam,
Methinks, have voices in their swell,
That say, Come, make thy daily home
With that bright sea thou lovest so well.

And here in truth so sweet and wild,
So lone and beautiful the spot,
In it might live the ocean's child,
As in his own familiar grot.

And here is many a secret nook
For eyes on nature wont to feed,
Where the sea ripples like a brook
Around the tufts of dark-brown weed;

Haunts of the billow and the breeze,
Retreats grotesque, and cool, and dim;—
O! tell me, better than in these,
Where might I rest each wearied limb?

The wide and mighty main should be
My father, brother, trusted friend;
To the old wisdom of the sea
My thoughts, my heart, I here might lend.

And he with every wave should teach
Knowledge so deep and free and high,
The scanty sounds of human speech
Have nought of truth therewith to vie.

And I my spirit would control
Into the child's subservient mood,
And daily fill my gasping soul
With all he speaks of wise and good.

Then ought I not the crowd to flee,
Their thoughts despise, their deeds abhor?
And make the pure and holy sea
My playmate and my monitor?

Ay, but the universal love,
The instincts each to all that bind,
The blessed boon from Him above
To the vast brotherhood, mankind;

And God's own word, which bade us cling,
Heart unto heart, and hand to hand,—
Who has the evil strength to fling
From off his heart this inmost band?

And I would rather live my days
The tenant of a dungeon's gloom,
Where nought of heaven's fresh brightness plays,
And chains each wasting limb consume,—

So might I find some heart to blend
In free communion with my own,
Than make the boundless sea my friend,—
With none but him to hear my moan.

July 8.—I went on board a boat in which I was rowed along the coast towards the west. The chalk cliffs are very fine, some of them more than 600 feet in height. There are several caves running in beneath their bases, whither sea-monsters might retire to sleep, or Tritons come to meditate. They are curious and interesting, but not very long or lofty. When I got near the Needles, I saw a bay called Scatchell's, where the cliffs are particularly bold and rampart-like. Thin courses of flint run along them in diagonal lines, all parallel to each other.

At one spot I went upon the shingly beach, and walked into a wide, but apparently rather narrow, recess in the chalk. Then turning round so as to look over the sea, and raising my eyes, I found myself under a stupendous natural arch, a segment, as it were, of a dome, from beneath which I saw the ocean, with all its solemn breadth and sparkling points, rolling away till it seemed piled against the sky. Altogether the cliffs of this bay, called St. Christopher's, are wonderfully striking. The Needles, which have been so much celebrated, now look like scanty relics of columns, which may have upheld some Preadamite palace. Alum Bay however fulfils, and more than fulfils the highest demands of any rational expectation. It is not sublime, nor elegant, but strangely and beautifully fantastic. The prevailing forms are sharp peaks, and grotesque lumps, neither undulating, nor in general massy. These are so coloured, as to exhibit in one place the strongest contrasts, and in another the softest gradations, of innumerable brilliant tints. Among them are all the varieties of reds and browns, with a good deal of green, and some yellow. The last colour displays perhaps the most remarkable hues, some of them the most delicately tender, and others of a deep orange glow. These curious phenomena extend to a considerable distance along the shore of a lovely bay. I saw it lighted by the most sunny and transparent

atmosphere, while the smooth sea, as blue as the heavens, and as clear as a mountain-spring, scarcely rippled upon the pebbly strand at the foot of the cliffs, which fronted, in their singular and preternatural beauty, the pure azure of the heavens.

In what fantastic mood and frolic hour
Did Nature build these peaks, with all the dyes
That sunset gives the clouds of summer skies,
As if sweet Hesper had an earthly bower
Far from his own bright west? The glorious dower
Of fairy loveliness, that greets our eyes
In this lone bay, whose crags like rainbows rise,
How much it has of strange and witching power
To bid the soul through wildest visions roam!
Perhaps the Gnomes bethought themselves to rear
Beneath the breezy heavens an ocean-home,
And piled these cliffs by magic; many a year
Perhaps some Ariel hath disported here,
Between these gorgeous rocks and yonder sea's white foam.

From Alum Bay I walked to the lighthouse on the high promontory above. From the summit of the hill the prospect is very extensive and varied. Beneath is a wide sea, bounded in front by the coasts of Dorsetshire and Hampshire, with all their grey towers, and houses of shining white, and scattered woodland. On the left the billows are only terminated by the horizon. Behind is the far-stretching shore of the island, ending in the promontory of St. Catherine's. On the right the eye passes over a pretty, contented-looking district, one side of which is formed by the enchanted scenery of Alum Bay,

to the arm of the sea between the island and Hampshire, to the beautiful coast of that county, and the long tongue of land which ends in Hurst Castle. The sea, so much of which enters into this prospect, was to-day extremely blue and brilliant, and gemmed with white sails moving quickly and gracefully before the breeze. All this was seen in great perfection by any one standing in the gallery of the lighthouse; and its reflection was also very clear and striking in the plate-glass panes of the windows. The light is a fixed one, and is produced by argand lamps placed in front of highly polished concave reflectors. The lamps, the number of which I forget, consume 700 gallons of oil yearly. Sometimes as many as a hundred small birds fly against the windows in a single night, and are knocked down by the concussion. The woman who exhibited the lighthouse, and who always lives in it, is apparently an admirable specimen of honest and civil good sense.

From the lighthouse I walked back to Freshwater Gate, over a high and breezy down, breaking on one hand into the sheer precipices under which I had sailed in going, and melting on the other into the valley, over which I saw the strait between Yarmouth and Lymington. At Freshwater Gate I again hired a boat, and set sail for Black-Gang-Chine. We had a fair wind, which carried us pleasantly along. I asked the boatman,

a clever fellow in his way, a good many questions about the state of the people in the island. I was surprised to find that, neat, apparently comfortable, and even simply elegant as their cottages generally are, the peasantry can scarcely ever earn more than eight shillings a week each, and that not regularly. The shore, along which we sailed, is very striking. It is uniformly brown or red; and the cliffs have a singular appearance from the strongly marked horizontal strata. The places where chalybeate water trickles over the precipices are very evident, by the rich brown columns extending from the summit to the base. The view of the *chines* or gorges in these cliffs, as they are seen from the sea, is singular. They are sudden perpendicular breaks in the face of the ascent, through which inland waters have formed themselves an outlet. More than one of them resembles a mighty gash inflicted by the sword of an Orlando. The Black-Gang-Chine is especially remarkable. The hills into which the cliff rises at each side, are marked very singularly with broad horizontal bands, as if of regular, though rough masonry; and these are alternated with layers of the rude and broken sandstone. These two great masses stand side by side, like the eternal buttresses of a continent; and between them, for a small portion of their height, extends a kind of amphitheatre, the area of which is to a great degree covered with mounds

of earth and sandstone. A space however remains in the centre; and into this falls in drops a small ferruginous stream, which has tinged the cliff with a perpendicular track of dusky red, and collecting upon a little platform of sand at the base, which it has similarly stained, finds its way at last through a narrow gulley to the sea. At some distance above the top of this curtain, which connects the two hills, they break off into other ascents, still more steep than the lower ones, and some of them as strangely adorned; and through them the *chine* or gorge continues to wind up to the summit of the cliff. The beach at the base of these precipices is exactly similar to that which extends a great distance along this shore, and is entirely composed of a bank of small smooth yellow flints, rounded by the waves, and interspersed with many real pebbles, of which in a few minutes I picked up a pocketful. After clambering up Black-Gang-Chine, and some higher steeps still nearer St. Catherine's, I looked down upon the sea, and the deposit of a recent land-slip; and after gazing for a few moments over a vast extent of sea, and along the shore we coasted to-day, I pursued my road to the eastward.

The Undercliff is a broad terrace, extending for several miles along the shore, at a considerable height above the sea, but very much lower than another range of cliff which runs behind it. You

therefore have on one hand, rising to a great elevation, a rugged wall of sandstone; and on the other edge of the precipice, at the foot of which the sea dashes, the Undercliff presents a broken surface, in many parts some half-mile wide. It appears to have been produced by the fall of large portions of the cliff above; but all the marks of ruin, except the picturesque variety of outline, have been effaced by the luxuriant growth of trees and creepers. The latter in many places have clambered up the face of the highest part of the cliff, and draped it from top to bottom with a mantle of brilliant green. Almost the whole Undercliff is divided into grounds, for the cottages of peasants or gentlemen; and these grounds are planted into the most delightful woodland, opening at every turn, from the perpetual fluctuation of the surface, into glorious visions of the sea; while on the other side they almost as often spread themselves up some inclined portion of the cliff, so as to interpose a mound of massy and graceful foliage between the road and the height above. The summit of the lower cliff, from which the whole scenery takes its name, is varied by a constant succession of glens, crags, and gullies, gently swelling elevations, and broken vallies. The cottages are, without an exception, in the very style which a poet would have imagined, and a painter designed. The village, for instance, called Steephill, consists of a number of these rustic

buildings, growing out of a lofty bank of rich foliage, which stretches in front of the higher cliff. They stand at different elevations; so that, from the brink of the precipice which hangs over the sea, the eye takes in the whole of them, that is, perhaps a dozen at the same moment. They are all, I think, made up of grey walls, crowned by thatched roofs; and the glittering window-panes, and bright green creepers, together with the simple variety of the whole outline, and the effect it derives from a good part of each of them being hid by its orchard, or by other neighbouring trees, combine to make it the prettiest village I ever saw.

Ay, there in truth they are, the quiet homes
And hallowed birth-spots of the English race,
Scattered at will beneath the crag's rude face,
While springs gush round, and near the ocean foams.
What finds he like to these, afar who roams?
Tall trees o'ershade them; creepers fondly grace
Lattice and porch; and sweetest flowers embrace
Each rock and pathway. Out on stately domes!
The offspring of these roofs deserve a land
Thus rich and fair: men may be proud indeed,
'Mid all their history's long and glorious band,
To own the blood of England's peasant seed.
Lowly, yet strong, these brown-thatched cabins stand;
And such the spirit of the sons they breed.

The cliffs which run behind Steephill, and are continued the whole way from Niton to Eastend, present a barrier of rough and large magnificence. The action of the weather upon the sandstone

has produced, towards their over-hanging summits, a rude succession of horizontal ledges, which are frequently rent and jagged into the most shapeless irregularity.

The cliffs with many a various-tinted scar,
The sea with isles of broad and purple shade,
The trees that in their strength so graceful are,
The weeds that wreathe each rock with gorgeous braid,
The skies in blue transparent light arrayed,
The cloud that moves as slowly as a star,
In loveliness and joy they all are made,
Fit home for holy thoughts. Alas! that ill,
When all is bright without, within should haunt us still!

Or take it in another measure.

The hills in rude tremendous beauty rise,
With front and storm through countless ages rent;
Of yellow, brown, and red, a thousand dyes
On each rough crag and airy ledge are blent.
These giant walls a haunt secure have lent
And natural dwelling to the ivy's green;
And none along these rocks their gaze have sent,
Nor blest with softened heart its living sheen.
Like it, along the steep, man's daily way,
All high resolves and gentle feelings climb,
Each sympathy that hallows human clay,
Impulse of love, and Godward thought sublime.
Beyond that toilsome mountain's summit grey
Is nought but gales of joy and heaven's unclouded day.

I found on the edge of the Undercliff, and almost overhanging the beach, the little parish church of St. Lawrence, about twenty feet long, and eleven broad. It is of perfectly plain, solid Gothic architecture, and surrounded by a small burial-ground, the oldest tombstone in which bears

the date of 1639. This humble old temple was to me extremely interesting. When in it, you seem more completely face to face with God, than when you are under arches of lofty dimness, and look through the perspective of far-receding aisles. The sense of the Divine presence is dissipated in the vastness. It was not perhaps without a meaning, that the Temple of Jerusalem was appointed to be built of a size to us comparatively small. But the minuteness of the church of St. Lawrence exceeds everything I remember to have read of ecclesiastical architecture.

The humble building rises fair,
  Beneath the cliff, above the sea,
As though it had grown upward there,
  A temple for the heart to be.
  Its quiet beauty blesses me
  With thrills of inmost gladness;
And e'en its lowly mounds leave nought
To raise a single aching thought,
  Or throb of bitter sadness.

The little bell against the sky,
  The low grey walls, the printless sod,—
The roof through which with fearless eye
  We look in faith to find our God,—
  The church-yard small, so seldom trod,
  Whence wandering folly flees,—
In holy beauty all is calm:
O kneel, and raise a grateful psalm
  To God in love for these.

The main below, the heavens above,
  Speak not of God more plain than thou:
Around thee breathes a voice of love;
  And humble strength is on thy brow.

Methinks thy narrow floor e'en now
The Mighty Presence fills;
And thou art earth's most fitting place
For man to commune face to face
With Him his life who wills.

In following the road along the Undercliff, you meet perpetually with vallies running down to the beach, filled with the swelling forms and rich verdure of thick wood, through which the brown thatched roof of a cottage rises every now and then, exciting long trains of associations and sympathies. Towards the end of this delicious range, the road runs into an open lawn, studded with trees, at one side of which there stood, looking towards the sea, a large cottage,—quite cottage, yet seemingly a handsome house, which, to a castle-builder, cottage though it is, would, if he had any taste, be the very ideal of a residence*. The closely wooded grounds appear to border the path for a considerable distance. Beyond them, at the foot of a slight hill, spreads an exquisite little lake, 200 or 300 yards in length, the water as clear as dew, and shaded by a grove which covers a high bank behind it. After leaving the Undercliff, the best possible earthly fairy-land,

* They to whom the author of these volumes has been in any way endeared, will feel an interest in knowing that the last year of his life was spent in a house very near to this spot, and of which this might seem to be an anticipative description. His body was laid in the beautiful churchyard just below the little lake here spoken of.

as combining all the varied and fanciful beauty of enchantment, with the highest degree of domestic, comfortable reality, I mounted a hill, the headland of East End; after which I obtained a fine view of Sandown Bay, a noble piece of the ocean, bounded in front by the white Culver Cliffs. A bye-path, shorter than the high road, brought me through a spot of pretty tranquil cultivation to Shanklin.

This *Chine* is as different as possible from Black-Gang-Chine. It is considerably deeper and wider; but the great point of contrast is, that Shanklin-Chine is to a great degree robed in picturesque wood. The coast through which it opens, very much resembles that I passed yesterday between Freshwater and the Undercliff. It is built of dark brown strata, slightly inclined from the horizontal. The Chine is very broad, and makes two or three angles before it terminates in a minute waterfall, such as might flow through a lady's ring. The path, which conducts you to a level with this, rises very much from the shore. In one place there is so large a platform in the side of the cleft, that a pretty cottage has been built upon it. The sides of the Chine, being of a reddish brown, contrast with, and throw out capitally, the clothing of foliage which is spread over a considerable part of them.

July 9.—All the cottages on the road to Ryde are as neat and comfortable-looking as those I

have before mentioned. It would seem as if the habit of living among fine scenery had given a taste and an eye for the picturesque to the lowest classes in the Isle of Wight.

This evening a long bank of cloud continued to stand on the horizon for a good while after sunset, like hills of solid crimson fire; an illustration of the *flammantia moenia mundi.* The sky afterwards grew black; and the red orb of the moon was just rising over the hills on the opposite coast of Hampshire, while its upper rim was lost behind an impenetrable cloud. It looked very like my notion of a distant volcano seen in a dark night.

July 11.—

Once more, thou darkly rolling main,
I bid thy lonely strength adieu;
And sorrowing leave thee once again,
Familiar long, yet ever new!

And while, thou changeless, boundless sea,
I quit thy solitary shore,
I sigh to turn away from thee,
And think I ne'er may greet thee more.

Thy many voices, which are one,
The varying garbs that robe thy might,
Thy dazzling hues at set of sun,
Thy deeper loveliness by night;

The shades that flit with every breeze
Along thy hoar and aged brow,—
What has the universe like these?
Or what so strong, so fair as thou?

And when yon radiant friend of earth
Has bridged the waters with her rays,
Pure as those beams of heavenly birth
That round a seraph's footsteps blaze;

While lightest clouds at time o'ercast
The splendour gushing from the spheres,
Like softening thoughts of sorrow past,
That fill the eyes of joy with tears;

The soul, methinks, in hours like these,
Might pant to flee its earthly doom,
And freed from dust to mount the breeze,
An eagle soaring from a tomb;

Or mixed in stainless air to roam
Where'er thy billows know the wind,—
To make all climes my spirit's home,
And leave the woes of all behind;

Or, wandering into worlds that beam
Like lamps of hope to human eyes,
Wake 'mid delights we now but dream,
And breathe the rapture of the skies.

But vain the thoughts: my feet are bound
To this dim planet,—clay to clay,—
Condemned to tread one thorny round,
And chained with links that ne'er decay.

Yet while thy ceaseless current flows,
Thou mighty main, and shrinks again,
Methinks thy rolling floods disclose
A refuge safe, at least from men.

Within thy gently heaving breast,
That hides no passions dark and wild,
My weary soul might sink to rest,
As in its mother's arms a child;

Forget the world's eternal jars
In murmurous caverns cool and dim,
And, long o'ertoiled with angry wars,
Hear but thy billows distant hymn.

THOUGHTS.

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CRYSTALS FROM A CAVERN.

I SEEM to see a hard polished Mosaic spread over the earth, enamelled with animals, flowers, and men. They are the smooth and glittering, but lifeless ornaments of a subterranean tomb. The rain falls on them; but not a drop sinks in. The wind blows over them, but cannot stir a leaf of the plants, or a tress of the figures. It is a noble work. But the living roots below begin to strive; and the flowers fracture and displace their stone copies; and a fountain forces its way through the rent masterpiece. The stag that bounds across, and the ox that lies down on it, shake and crack the picture; and the labourer with his pickaxe dashes away the shapes of goddesses and heroes, and seeks for soil below, in which to drive his plough and sow his seed. The artist stands aghast, and exclaims, *How wretched, that these living things should destroy my beautiful creation!*

Beautiful it may be, replies the peasant; *but your figures are dead; and I am a man.*

The gods were met in air, above Olympus, and delighted themselves with discourse and

song, till Vulcan, Hermes, and Pallas proposed to display before the conclave a pageant of the universe. Vast golden columns rose from darkness, and climbed amid the stars. A cloud-curtain filled the interspace; and across this floated vision after vision of worlds, and all their kinds, phantoms multitudinous and immeasurable, and painted with the colours of reality. But suddenly the eagle sailed in amid the gods on expanded wings; and his talons were fixed in the girdle of a mortal child.

Send the bantling, exclaimed Vulcan with a glance of scorn, to swell that crowd of earthly figures passing in our aerial show.

Nay, said Pallas, they are shadows; and he, though clay-born, lives, and is akin to us. Let him behold the vision, which, being more than a phantom, he cannot belong to. And she placed him at the feet of Jove, who smiled on the nursling of his lowest kingdom.

As one who at broad noonday should close the windows and doors of his house, and stop every crevice to keep out the light, that it may not dim the shining of his candles, and should then strike a spark in this corner and that, and rejoice in seeing here a match and there a taper, and think how much nobler it is to enjoy this illumination of his own, than to owe aught to the

sun,—so is he who shuts himself in the chambers of his self-will, and darkens himself against the radiance of truth. Poor man! he knows not, in the pride of his independence, that even his weak and meagre glimmer is a witness to some higher source of light than himself, whose effluence he did not create, but only appropriate and obscure.

To the eye of Faith, and of Science too, which without Faith is but a catalogue of names, every grain of dust is surrounded with its own coloured and life-sustaining atmosphere, and turns on the poles of a principle, that is, of a life governed by a law.

Ariel imprisoned in the pine,—such is the view of man's spirit, if evil be but hindrance and difficulty. But if evil be guilt, be sin, man is an Ariel pent, not in the trunk of the pine, but in the heart of Caliban, filled with the same life-blood, stirred by the same emotions, feeling every hideous temptation that assails or resides in that bestial form, and condemned to regard it as the companion and instrument of all his acts. From that dismal bondage no magic wand, no sage charming of a human Prospero can call the captive forth.

The moral satirist declaims against the cruelty and covetousness, the madnesses and follies of men, and thinks how wise he is to see through the aimlessness and vanity of these,—too apt to believe that, because he sees through others, he himself is exempt from their frailties. Yet few human follies are worse than the merely striving to see through those of all around us. There is something better than satire or declamation. What is it? Philosophy? Not, if this be mere speculation; for this too is only a seeing through. It is Love, Reverence, Faith. That is a dreadful eye, which can be divided from a living, human, heavenly heart, and still retain its power of all-penetrating vision. Such was the eye of the Gorgons.

Of man, as a reasonable, spiritual being, feeling is the vital heat, and bears a like relation to our faculties and mental acts, as that of the body to our visible frame, or that of the earth and air to the forms of vegetable life. As is the difference between the fulness of life in the tropics, and the dearth and stuntedness of it towards the poles, such is the contrast between those minds and nations in whom feeling is abundant, and those in whom it is deficient. Give the Arctic circle the warmth of India; and, with no other change as to causes, you will have the frozen land melting into bloom and verdure, and the

hidden seeds disclosing on all sides a harvest of exuberant wealth and beauty. Such an alteration is produced by the awakening of deep, earnest, and lively feeling in the hearts of men and races, such an expansion of the powers, and a similar vivifying of the whole man.

It is important to remember that there is an apparent predominance of feeling in the character, which in reality argues a deficiency of it. For the utmost quickness in the excitement, succession, and expression of feelings, proves that the quality of the feeling is weak and poor. Were it otherwise, it would hold too strongly to its known and experienced objects, to transfer itself so readily to new ones; and moreover it would shrink from displaying itself before those, in whom it could not reckon on sympathies of corresponding depth.

But the gods and kings of mixed and multitudinous society are most commonly those whose feelings are the slightest, and the lightest armed, and the readiest therefore for all occasions. This is true, whether they are feelings in their first and native character, as sensibility, taste, generosity, and so forth; or the same apostatized, the renegade feelings which take the names and arms of irony, sarcasm, and contempt; which last is often, but not always, self-contempt going into company, that it may escape from home.

Man starts on his journey in a dark and savage forest, and himself rude, haggard, fierce. He toils on, hardly knowing wherefore, but driven by the impulse of life and its necessities, and allured with moth-like instinct in the direction of the light that glimmers before him. He contends with beasts; he hews down trees; he mingles with others of his kind in amity and bloody contention. Here and there in the forest he builds himself a hut, or finds a den. Now he erects some shapeless memorial, where he has found a more grateful spot of rest, or a bright gleam has fallen on him from the skies: for the wish to give outward substance and permanent habitation to his emotions moves him, as the wind the mist which it condenses. Elsewhere in his journey he constructs a forge and smelts metals, and makes himself tools and ornaments. And again, amid some opening glade, he joins a busy and shifting market. He learns to love the fellowship of his kind, and tastes the sweets of human intercourse; for language now has woven itself round him like a sphere of luminous beams, displaying to him all those around him, and making his aspect bright to them. He is helped on his way by troops of revellers with songs and torches; and again they leave him, and the wilderness is still around him. At another point some grave and lonely hermit leads him on, and cheers him with words of

hope, and rebukes him with words of wisdom, which find an echo in his heart, while they seem to give distinct expression to its long-choked but ever deepening murmurs. The flower-bands of love check the boisterous uncouthness of his gestures; and the air of love opens his hard encrusted breast. And all helps to soften the ruggedness of his aspect, to calm his headlong pulse, and to teach him to bend his eyes forward and upward with a thoughtful and longing gaze. Phantoms and realities thicken round his path. The forest seems to shut in drearier closeness; and now and then a brighter radiance bursts across it, and makes him feel by its disappearance as if, in spite of the steady growth of light, he were again, as at first, in total darkness. He rests in a stately inn; he threads long colonnades, and through opening vistas looks on distant, but still deeply overclouded prospects. By and by he finds a lamp burning before a lonely shrine; or a single piercing ray lights up some image or inscription; and through deep and mazy arches, through lines of tombs, and over ivy-curtained graves, he is guided by broken songs and solemn harpings. He bends at last beneath a high cathedral roof, before a silent altar, where the full brightness of the skies looks on him through the forms of saints and angels from the face of God. On childlike knees the pilgrim sinks; and, while

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his spirit flies upward to the light that can alone satisfy it, the weary body drops into the closing sepulchre, and leaves no earthly record, but the marble effigy that sleeps before the altar with closed palms.

There are minds in which the idea of duty stands immovably as the only assertion of man's spiritual being. In such men it resembles a rock unclothed of all verdure, from which all life-sustaining soil has been washed away, and with nothing near it but a dreary tossing sea of passions and strivings. Duty is thus felt as the great painful burden of existence, but which it is nobler to bear than to escape from, as the mind assures itself of its own strength only by the effort of upholding its load. But the exertion is so painful, that it often disturbs all clear, calm views of the world around. The suffering and the sense of contradiction embody themselves in the belief that the whole universe is equally jarring, perilous, and tortured. Hence a reckless ferocity of opposition to whatever claims a quiet and stable dominion. Hence too a fretful bitter scorn for the convictions and sympathies of those who maintain that, either for their own minds, or for mankind as a race, escape is provided from the bondage of law into the freedom of life and love. From the feeling of perpetual struggle, in which victory promises no reward but the

dreary pride of victory, arises a sympathy with all struggle, however mad and blind, against any restraining force, and a cruel and disdainful spite against the attempts, in a progressive system necessarily inadequate and imperfect, at introducing order amid the world's confusions. Unless in truth these should happen to be chiefly remarkable as fierce and plundering revolts against the previous and more lasting endeavours, the uppermost feeling in the mind being that of resistance, that of a holding fast one's ground against hostility, the tendency will always be to look with favour on all kindred efforts, however desperate and insane, and to scout as lies, hypocrisy, vanity, pedantry, and so forth, the notion that there can be any good in the traditional maxims, symbols, and institutions of society. It is a dreary picture; but, though insufficiently transferred to language, its originals have an undeniable existence. However horrid the thought of their Cain-like isolation and ulcerated feelings, their inextricable clinging to a strong and deep principle, under the heavy pressure of anguish and despair, makes them objects of true and brotherly sympathy to every believer in spiritual realities. The great error seems to be the substitution of a law for a personal being, a God. A law must be obeyed at whatever cost of reluctance, and has no tendency to make obedience easy. It is only a per-

son that can be loved; and with love comes life and hope.

The unflinching and unlimited self-will of Bonaparte, together with his sense of numerical order and combination, acted on revolutionized and revolutionary France as an arctic winter on the storm-tost waters. By the freezing of the waves the worn-out and perishing crew of a crazy vessel may be preserved from drowning. But they can never hope to return to port or be finally rescued, except by the passing away of the tyrannous congelation, which has enclosed the ship and all the world around it in a case of smooth ice.

The man himself appears to have been great only in his gigantic self-will, and his ready and unwearied capacity for combining and applying the calculable elements of power. In all that relates to feeling, duty, and imagination, he was a mean and insolent barbarian; and, though there are many men on record of far more capricious and drunken impulses, there is probably none more entirely destitute of conscience. It seems probable that much of his ambition, perhaps much of all aggressive and cumulative ambition, is to be explained by the perpetual inward uneasiness and pressure arising from the obscure consciousness that his power rested on no worthy base of honour, benevolence, and reason. Whence the

otherwise inexplicable anxiety for outward confirmations, sops to his self-distrust, such as victories, titles, monuments, royal marriages, and even the mere frippery of his station, which, when not a matter of custom and course, is even ludicrous and sickening. Whence too the remorseless fury with which he stamped down the slightest show of resistance, and his mad irritation against the breath of ridicule or neglect. For the pettiest of such demonstrations touched on and lacerated his own morbid sense of instability.

The great secret of the vulgar awe which his name still inspires, is simply this, that his kind of greatness, viz., the Alaric or Bashaw species, is that which alone all minds, including the meanest, can understand and envy. Even these might perhaps be expected to consider that no power so pompous and plausible ever since the beginning of history has made such utter shipwreck.

A man with knowledge, but without energy, is a house furnished, but not inhabited: a man with energy, but no knowledge, a house dwelt in, but unfurnished.

Self-consciousness in most men flashes across the field of life, like lightning over a benighted plain. The sage has the art to compel it into

his lamp and detain it there, and is thus enabled to explore the region which we are born into and dwell in, and which is nevertheless so unknown to most of us.

The greatest intellectual difference among men is not that of having or not having thought on any one given subject, or any number of subjects; but of having or not having ever thought at all. He who has known the dignity, the strength, the sense of liberation, in the attainment of an independent personal conviction, has probably taken the greatest leap possible for the mere intellect. But such convictions are less common than they may seem. Bank-notes are not forged or stolen once, for ten thousand times that the same felonies are committed as to thoughts.

Will is the root; knowledge the stem and leaves; feeling the flower.

The man who can only scoff in his heart at the recollection of his first love, however extravagant and ill-directed it may have been, is not to be trusted with another's life. He scorns his own.

There is hardly a more serious spectacle than that of a man in rags, and without any moral

cultivation, reading a newspaper. What are the many Marii in one Cæsar compared with Marii, by millions? You cannot stop the reading of newspapers; but you may give the education that will act as a previous antidote.

If you want to understand a subject, hear a man speak of it whose business it is. If you want to understand the man, hear him speak of something else.

A beautiful plant is to a solitary man a sort of vegetable mistress.

There are men from whom any burst of passion seems as extraordinary, as would be the breaking out of a volcanic eruption from the apex of a pyramid. Now the pyramid has certainly this advantage over the smoking cone, that from it we look for no discharge of fire and lava. But the artificial mound of granite is lifeless, and incapable of supporting life: no gases work within it; and no tree grows without. It stands for thousands of years, unmouldering indeed, but dry, barren, verdureless. If then we beheld a mind resembling this, a mind of mere intellectual predetermination and rigid self-will, should we not have cause to rejoice, though with fear, on finding that there were boiling springs of life

within, that the pyramid had been built above a crater? For thus, by an epoch of convulsion and destruction, the artificial casing might be shattered, and a soil disclosed below, capable, in time, of receiving dews and seeds into its bosom, and of bearing fruits and flowers.

When the meaning is too big for the words, the expression is quaint. When the words are too big for the meaning, it is bombastic. The one is pleasing, as an imperfection of growth; the other unpleasing, as that of decay. The one must be looked for in a fresh and advancing literature; the other infects a literature past its prime, when words have become a trade, and are valued apart from thoughts. The talk of children is often quaint; that of worn-out men of the world often bombastic, where the error is not precluded by a perpetual sneer, or a drivelling chatter.

How many truths and errors, especially in religion and politics, are included in one or other of these three propositions!—A. The present is but a repetition or prolongation of the past. B. The present is not the past, and has nothing to do with it. C. The present grows out of the past by unceasing evolution and enlargement, and is neither identical with nor independent of it.

Colour, in the outward world, answers to feeling in man,—shape to thought,—motion to will. The dawn of day is the nearest outward likeness of an act of creation; and it is therefore also the closest type in nature for that in us which most approaches to creation,—the realization of an idea by an act of the will.

It is foolish to talk of war as the mere suffering and infliction of a certain amount of physical pain, and therefore as unmixed evil. If it were a question between pain and no pain, and there were no other considerations, this would be reasonable. But it is not so; for there are far more important elements in the calculation. In the first place, the energy which enables men to encounter pain, nay, often renders them for a time altogether insensible of it. Then, the orderly combining intelligence, and the uniform consciousness of law, producing the obedience of a hundred thousand men as if they were but one. These are the least matters, though not trifling ones. There is also the feeling of excited social sympathy with those who to us are everything, while the enemies, the objects of resentment, are thought of only in the abstract. Above all, there is patriotism, the inspiring and elevating consciousness that we are struggling and endangering ourselves for the sake of our

country, of that ideal from which we derive our social, and therefore, properly speaking, our human existence. It has transmitted, along with the wealth, the purified and accumulated faith of thirty generations of ancestors; and to it we owe that we are not landless vagabonds or thoughtless savages.

All this life of heart is called into play in war. If it be said that the same good might be attained in other ways, it may be answered that this one way is necessary: for, if war were altogether abstained from, and the country were left open to be overrun and laid waste by the first marauding conqueror, the very name and thought of a nation would be lost. And when a nation perishes, a nobler work is given up to destruction, than any pile of architecture, any synod of marble gods, or painted vision ever fixed by man. For a nation is a generative power, capable of producing, through thousands of years, living, thinking, magnanimous, and godly men. Is that to be all surrendered, rather than inflict or endure wounds and death? What is this but to make the end of man be a succession of agreeable sensations? his greatest evil to be mere bodily suffering? This is doubtless no defence of unjust wars: but the peculiar evil in them is not the war; it is the injustice. Peace may be unjust, no less than war. The work of Christian civilization, as to war, will therefore be

this: it will prevent iniquitous contests; and as there is always iniquity on one side or other, all war will in time be brought to an end. In the mean time it is a monstrous contradiction, that the same Christianity should open our eyes wide, nay, arm them with microscopes, to discern the mournful character of warlike acts, which are indeed terrific enough, and yet should strike us with stone-blindness as to the weight and blessedness of the interests at stake on the being of a nation.

II.

THE lunar light of rhetoric has often a similar effect to that of moonshine in the tropics. It strikes those blind who doze under the effluence. A crowd convulsed by the language of a political or religious fanatic is for the time moonstruck. But dreamer indeed would he be, who should suppose the source of the mischief to be, like Ariosto's moon, the store-house of all the lost wits of the sufferers.

Every man employs, for a large part of every day, a mechanism far more wonderful than the engine of Watt or Babbage: and an additional wonder is, that few know they use so sublime an instrument, though it is worked by distinct acts of their own thought and will.

What is it?

Language. By this we build pyramids, fight battles, ordain and administer laws, shape and teach religion, are knit man to man, cultivate each other, and ourselves. How vast is our self-glorification for the art of writing! how infinite for the smaller art of printing! how silent and null for that of speech! Our noblest gifts are too apparently invaluable and divine, to be referred as matter of praise to ourselves; and therefore we do

not think of them at all, but take them for granted as a portion of ourselves. Yet are not even we ourselves given to us by a power higher than ourselves?

Mankind moves onward through the night of time like a procession of torch-bearers; and words are the lights which the generations carry. By means of these they kindle abiding lamps beside the track which they have passed; and, in the hands of the sage and prophetic leaders of the train, these shoot forward a column of light into the darkness before them. The darkness indeed is still great; but it is much, that, by means of the light which contrasts with it, we know it to be darkness.

A man once said, with an air of much self-complacency, *I believe only what is proved.* Another answered, *You seem to think this a merit; yet what does it mean, but that you believe only what you cannot help believing?*

That which it is important to believe, is that which we need not believe, unless we will to do so. The ancient oracles often deceived men to believe that which it was a duty to disbelieve. There are modern ones which seek to better the instruction by changing it into the exact converse. On all sides mingle, and help each other's discord, the thin whines and harsh grunts of a faithless

necessity. On all sides yawns before us the grim and stupid falsehood,—the will has nothing to do with our belief.

The prose man knows nothing of poetry; but poetry knows much of him, nay, all that he knows not of himself,—and how much is that!—as well as all that he does know, which indeed is little.

There is a kind of catholicism of opinion, which honours truth in the same way as he who marries many contemporaneous wives honours marriage, or as the man honours property, who appropriates as much as possible from his neighbours.

The harmony and correlation of nature as a whole are far more perfect than in any reproduction of a part of it by art. But because art cannot represent the great whole, except typically, it has, as its peculiar function, to unite and round into a minor whole such fragments as it can grasp. If it created only a literal copy, its work would not be a whole, but still fragmentary. He therefore, who would substitute a literal copy for a true work of art, manifestly wants the sense of that in his original, which art most looks to and draws life from, namely, the peaceful and musical

unity which pervades it, and blends together all its portions in one great image, the outward symbol of one God.

A picture-gallery full of spectators is an excellent image of the relation of art and reality. The unmoving, unblemished faces, and more than living accuracy of forms, the fine interwoven lines and fixed harmonizing colours, are all fitted in each picture to some single end. They are bounded by the definite purpose of the whole, which shuts up each composition as a distinct world. The thought cannot grow upon the canvas from spring to summer, or from year to year. It detains us within its own limits, excluding all the universe beyond. It is unchangeable indeed, but finite, irreceptive of aught from without, unconscious of aught within, and unproductive. While the beholders look and move before the high, glowing, many-coloured ideals, one recognises with sparkling eyes some vivid representation of that which he has himself observed in nature; another is delighted and satisfied by the grace and roundness of the group which reveals some ancient story; a third is lifted up and inspired by the sight of beauty beyond all that experience knows of, and owns the presence of a majestic imagination. But of their own faces no one, to a keen eye, is free from grievous defects and offences, or has the

perfectly serene and living expression, which all may be led to conceive, though none have seen it. There is weakness, meanness, rancour, ugliness, more or less visible in every aspect. The compositions which these real figures form with each other, are broken and harsh, crowded or vacant, confused and undefined, not centralized by any distinct purpose. Yet, on the other hand, every one of these beings has a life which grows without cessation, stands not in one fixed visible site, but in a thousand shifting and involved relations, is hemmed in by no wooden frame or magic circle of an artist's single conception, but has an infinite around it, and works and shapes itself therein, by a destiny that assigns to it no point beyond which it shall not pass.

Emotion turning back on itself, and not leading on to thought or action, is the element of madness.

Goethe sometimes reminds us of a Titan in a court-dress. But the Titan is the reality, the clothing only the fleeting appearance. To his greatness nothing was wanting, but the sense how far finite greatness, even such as his, is still below infinity; how much weaker is the strongest independence of an earthly spirit, than the dependence upheld by Him who alone can abide for ever, un-

subdued, yet peaceful. He was the shaping central figure of a world of light and graceful images, a lovely Greek Olympus. But over the smooth and bland aspects of his marble and ivory works, deep shadows and startling lights are thrown from the larger and more earnest sphere of the infinite, the personal,—in a word, the Christian,—which encircles, like sky and ocean, with huger proportions and immense vistas, his calmer, smaller dominion. These glimpses too and gigantic shadows of immortal ideas he endeavoured to unite by soft connexions with his own peculiar forms, and to invest them with the like serene and rounded beauty. But the element was too vital, insurgent, and for ever started away beneath his hand, or burst off in fierce discord from the easier and more pliant material of his art. Hence the inconsistency and painful jarring, which not seldom molest us in the midst of his quietest and most seductive creations.

There are persons not merely indifferent to knowledge, but who positively dislike it, because it puts them out in the rotary repetition of their ignorance.

One of the commonest of all delusions is that which leads us to weigh men against each other, and not by an absolute standard. The practical application of this error leads to an immoderate

admiration of men of great energies ill applied, and to a corresponding contempt for the weaker and narrower minds which have done all the best in their power with the portion of life and activity entrusted to them. We often estimate the man of abounding and busy faculties, by considering, not how far he has faithfully employed his whole being for high and pure ends, but what overbalance of right and arduous endeavours remains, after deducting all that is base, idle, and self-willed. And this overbalance may easily be so important, as to cast altogether into shade the utmost and entire labours of lesser minds, though these may have wrought with perfect singleness of aim and unwearied self-devotion. Glory to the selfish rich man's gorgeous offering! is still the cry of the world's orators, too often even of those most nobly gifted. Glory to the widow's mite! is that still sweet inward song of the true heart taught in endless harmonies issuing from the face of God.

How often to execute a thought is the same thing as to execute a man, that is, to put an end to it!

Philosophy is a Hermes, the messenger of the gods! who leads up some to those transparent and everlasting abodes, and others down to the land of shadows and unrealities, and therefore of

suffering. He sometimes plays divinest music, and is seated hard by Jupiter himself, who listens joyous; at other moments he is a swindler, liar, and thief, among the stalls and styes of earth.

It is worthy only of a Turk to saw down the statue of the Uranian Venus into blocks that may serve as steps to a harem, and to exult in the change. Such is the work of Epicurism.

We perpetually fancy ourselves intellectually transparent, when we are opaque, and morally opaque, when we are transparent.

It was the middle of August. The sun was setting in a rainy sky, which hid the disk behind a dark bank of cloud. The high tide of the distant sea had caused the river to overflow a portion of its green and wooded banks. The whole unbounded plain, from the height on which the two spectators stood, looked a bed of meadow and vineyard, through which the large and quiet river, with a few small sails upon its surface, flowed unheard and waveless to the city, which extended its shapely bridge, and raised its Gothic towers and spires, in the becalmed and noiseless evening. The sun was invisible, but hung near

enough to the lower edge of the clouds to shoot a bright red gleam obliquely across the river from above the town, and to tinge the lake-like inundation with a glow, spotted to the eyes of the gazers by the trees in the hedges of the flooded fields. The town alone broke the straight line of the horizon; and between its buildings and the skirt of the clouds was spread a pale clear amber air, while all round the sky and over the whole landscape the shades of green and grey were dimly blending. The evening bell sounded from a distant village-church; and the red light deepened and broadened on the water with a ruby blaze, while the vapours and land below the sun melted in a purple steam. Then the border of the cloud itself kindled; and from below it the sun's rim dropped, and seemed to hang a steady benignant fire. Through the broken clouds in the east, now tinged by the same red light of sunset, the full moon glanced serene. All was so peaceful and unmoving, while the far-off chime scarcely floated to the ear, that Time appeared to have ceased its beatings, and for a moment those two hearts lived in eternity.

In the spiritual, as in the physical world, for some portion of mankind, day is always dawning; and none are so dark as to want the tradition of past light, and the faith of its return.

To found an argument for the value of Christianity on external evidence, and not on the condition of man, and the pure idea of God, is to hold up a candle before our eyes that we may better see the stars. It may dazzle, but cannot assist us.

There is no lie that many men will not believe; there is no man who does not believe many lies; and there is no man who believes only lies.

One dupe is as impossible as one twin.

Physical results can prove nothing but a cause adequate to produce such, that is, a physical cause; though doubtless these results, when subservient to a spiritual system, may be used as illustrations of it. But the proofs of a spiritual system must be drawn from itself, must be spiritual proofs, and spiritually discerned. Therefore to the perverted, faithless, loveless mind they cannot be made manifest; and to attempt to argue a bad base creature into conscience and religion is a sowing of corn in the sea. Arguments are only valid for a man, in proportion as he has the consciousness of the premises they are grounded on. The Epicurean, or greatest-enjoyment-man, may not reason ill from the only grounds that his self-created habits and

feelings permit him to be conscious of. His creed is the only logical one for swine and baboons; and, if he chooses to make these his sect, it is his moral election, not his dialectic understanding, that we have a right to blame. From all this it follows that the question, what is spiritual cultivation? how may the spirit in man be cultivated? is, of all practical questions, infinitely the most important; or indeed that all others are but elements of this one.

It is thoughtless to say that, because *all things* we know have each their cause, *therefore* the whole must have one cause. We see that, within the bounds of nature, every phenomenon has a cause; but this does not entitle us to go beyond those bounds, to look at nature from without, and say that this too must have a cause. For the argument is evidently drawn only from the parts, and is unduly stretched when we apply it to the whole, though perfectly tenable when we merely reason from analogy, and conclude that, as the phenomena we know have causes, so must the phenomena we do not know. But every movement of existence might be in turn cause and result, and the whole be but a great everlasting wheel. It is as easy to imagine such a system eternal and infinite, as to suppose an eternal and infinite Author of it. The real ground

of religion is very different, and may be suggested by the question, Why is the view of the universe, as this great, self-included, self-reproducing whole, so weary and fearful, at the very best so unsatisfying, for the human mind? How can it be, but because the sense that we need a God is an infallible indication that there is one, an extra-mundane Creator, the idea of whom is consistent with all we know of the universe, and absolutely required by our best and deepest knowledge of ourselves and our fellow creatures.

Leaf. Thou unmoving mass! wherefore dost thou bar my way?

Stone. Thou idle wanderer! Water rolled me hither. Quarrel with it, not with me. But wherefore, I may ask in turn, dost thou flutter against me?

Leaf. Wind blew me hither. Blame it, not me.

Stone. Then may water and wind contend together and dispute, instead of us; while thou and I remain at peace.

Leaf. Nay, but water and wind will not struggle in anger. For a sweet bird sang one summer evening amidst my tree; and from him I learnt that they are fair twin-sisters; and when they seem to wrestle, it is but to dance together and embrace; and when they uplift their voices, it is but to join in song.

Every man has consciousnesses worse than the world would endure to hear of, but also wiser and better ones than it approves. Of these more memorable inward awakenings is the idea, which has always haunted mankind, of a universal, however indefinable affinity between themselves and the whole universe. We feel at times assured, though often unable to express the fact, even to ourselves, that the forms and laws of all other beings are all a portion of the forms and laws of our being. Somehow, although we know not how, it is myself that seems to me repeated, or prophesied, or drawn out into story, in everything I see. It is something of myself, some vast primordial matrix of my life, that glooms before me with closed eyes and folded senses in the dark huge rock. The doubts and struggles of my earnest hours are the strivings of a spirit working in fraternal union with that which animates the stormy landscapes, and groans in the bosoms of the ancient pine-trees. It seems to be a single deep and blissful heart, from which proceed at once the gentle and pious breathings of my devotion, and the pervading loveliness of this transparent sunset, as it melts into a starry night. So I, and all things round me, appear but different reflections of one great existence; some in dimmer, some in clearer, in grey, or purple, or golden, in smooth, or distorting mirrors. But there are still more startling sugges-

tions, when this kind of impression works upon us, not only from all the lower appearances, but from men themselves; when it is revealed to us that all the world of intellect, passion, and imagination, all poems, and histories, and mythologies, all tragic and heroic strains of life, exist by implication in every individual breast. For every man has in truth within himself, though buried perhaps under granite pavements of custom and ignorance, and under immemorial beds of cold lava, whatever was taught by the priests of Thebes, or with the sinking towers of Babylon rolled into oblivion before the trumpet of Cyrus, and all that was evoked from darkness by the lyre of Homer. Our whole constitution is prepared for the impulse, as the electric matter lies folded in the cloud. Give but this shock; and then might the beggar, the negro bondman, or the shrivelled money-hoarder, find flashing in his brain an Iago, a Falstaff, a Juliet, a Lear, —might rule, as Timour, a hundred kingdoms, and a million of horsemen,—in the person of Cæsar woo a Cleopatra,—teach as Plato, hear as Aristotle, die as Socrates,—as Columbus fashion a living, substantial world with the lines of a pencil on a chart; and as Isaiah thunder-strike the apostate kings of Judah, in whose wavering, greedy, cruel hearts he would also find an image of his own. So large, manifold, and one is our existence. Yet woe to him who in

this contemplation forgets that the life which is at the root of all, and is its substance, is good, is true, is holy; and works its way through an infinite scheme of forms to rest for ever in that godlike consciousness.

There are emotions in man so subtle and precious, that he cannot find for them even unuttered words. For sympathy is the vital air of language; and thoughts and feelings, which, by their nature, must be the birth of our deepest and most solitary moments, of those the least disturbed by the murmur of crowds, can never be communicated to crowds without a sense of unfitness and shame in the mind of the speaker, and a sense of irritation and repugnancy in the hearers. This higher and more inward language therefore, supposing such to be possible, could never have had the opportunity of arising. But the more meditative and vocal spirits may for themselves, and the comparatively few who are as themselves, indicate the shooting or lambent light in significant images, and perpetuate these in written speech, a legacy for all ages, of consolation to the few, and of perplexity to the many. Such things cannot, even in rare moments of serene and devout colloquy, be more palpably expressed than by a glance, a hint, a sigh.

The best and fairest world, of which man can form a complete and consistent image, is that in which men live.

Every fancy that we would substitute for a reality, is, if we saw aright, and saw the whole, not only false, but every way less beautiful and excellent, than that which we sacrifice to it.

The human heart is made for love, as the household hearth for fire,—and for truth, as the household lamp for light.

Heaven and hell are mixed together to make up this world, as light and darkness to compose the morning twilight.

To wish that others should learn by our experience is sometimes as idle as to think that we can eat and they be filled. But when we find that we have ate poison, it is doubtless mercy to warn them against the dish.

All the sad infernal rivers flow from fountains in this upper world.

He who conceived the images of Ixion and Sisyphus, Tantalus, and the Danaids, must have

felt those miseries in himself, before he transferred them to other names.

Superstition moulds nature into an arbitrary semblance of the supernatural, and then bows down to the work of its own hands.

The rudest granite block is the first sullen and blind attempt at sculpture, of the same plastic force which, working at last by the hands of man, shaped the Olympic Jove, and the Venus of Melos.

Practical life does all for a purpose; yet it is precisely in a reasonable ultimate purpose that it is most likely to be wanting.

The spontaneous life of emotion and imagination ends in powerlessness and emptiness, and mere slavery to outward impressions, unless its free movements be not indeed suppressed, but regulated towards distinct ends.

Daily, customary life is a dark and mean abode for man. Unless he often opens the door and windows, and looks out into a freer world beyond, the dust and cobwebs soon thicken over

every entrance of light; and in the perfect gloom he forgets that beyond and above there is an open air.

He who is satisfied with existence so long as it shines brightly, forgets that snuffing the candle will not prevent its burning to the socket.

Men narrow their views in order to see more distinctly, as they go to the bottom of a well to see the stars at noon. But it is a poor exchange to give sunlight for starlight.

There are characters so utterly and so unconsciously false and hollow, that they seem like casts or impressions of men, similar to those figures of fossil shells in rock, where there is no remnant of the shell itself,—rather than real men, however mutilated and dwarfed. And some such are plausible, full-blown spectacles, on whom daylight and general opinion shine flatteringly; while there shall be some crabbed, uncouth, unhappy fragment of genuine human life, that the whole universe scowls on, yet in truth far worthier than the gaudy image which overshadows and scorns it. The one is but a glaring figure in nature's magic lantern; the other one of her misshapen, disinherited children.

Could we imagine a complete devil's world, a world of lies, quacks would in it be the only professors, and proof of entire ignorance and incapacity would be the only requisite for obtaining all degrees and diplomas. Yet so much is there akin to this in our actual world, that many among us would sigh for such a state of things as for a millennium, a golden age,—an age in which all literature would be puffs, all discourse compliments and rhetoric; and he who wished most earnestly to pass for a great man, without being one, would be at once acknowledged worthiest of the honour.

An excess of excitement and a deficiency of enthusiasm may easily characterize the same period.

Enthusiasm is grave, inward, self-controlled; mere excitement outward, fantastic, hysterical, and passing in a moment from tears to laughter.

An age of eager, random movement keeps turning the windmill round and round, in hopes to grind the faster, forgetting that the wind blows from but one point at one time.

THOUGHTS AND IMAGES.

THERE are countenances far more indecent than the naked form of the Medicean Venus.

How overpowering are the mingled murmur, clang, tramp, and rattle of a body of troops, with all their footsteps, horses, arms, artillery, and varied voices! How insignificant compared with this uproar the speech of a single mouth! Yet the whisper of one mouth sets in motion and drives on to death and devastation twenty such bodies, comprising perhaps a hundred thousand human lives.

It is trivial to say that geometrical truth means only consistency with hypothesis, unless we add that the hypothesis is necessary and immutable.

Conceive an arch wanting only the keystone, and still supported by the centring, without which it would fall into a planless heap. It is now held up merely by the supports beneath it. Add the keystone; and it will stand a thousand years, although every prop should be shattered or fall in dust. Now, it is idle to say that this change in the principle of the structure was accomplished

by the mere addition of one more stone. The difference is not only that of increase, but also that of almost magical transmutation. No stone before helped to hold up its neighbour; and, each having its own prop, any one might have been removed without shaking the support of the others. Now each is essential to the whole, which is sustained, not from without, but by an inward law. So it is with religion. It not only adds a new feeling and sanction to those previously existing in the mind, but unites them by a different kind of force, and one for the reception of which all the invisible frame was prepared and planned, though it may stand for years unfinished, upheld by outward and temporary appliances, and manifesting its want of the true bond and centre which it has not yet received.

How many ought to feel, enjoy, and understand poetry, who are quite insensible to it! How many ought not to attempt to create it, who waste themselves in the fruitless enterprise! It must be a sickly fly, that has no palate for honey. It must be a conceited one, that tries to make it.

There can be poetry in the writings of few men; but it ought to be in the hearts and lives of all.

Many have the talents which would make them poets, if they had the genius. A few have the genius, yet want the talents.

No man is so born a poet, but that he needs to be regenerated into a poetic artist.

Luxurious and polished life, without a true sense for the beautiful, the good, and the great, is far more barren and sad to see, than that of the ignorant and brutalized. Even as a mere wilderness would be less dreary to traverse, than a succession of farms and gardens diligently and expensively cultivated to produce no crops but weeds.

There are minds, or seem to be such, which we can only compare to a noble cathedral, of vast size, beautiful proportions, and covered with graceful ornaments. Nothing that art can supply to devotion appears wanting, till we approach the great door and try to enter, when we find the seeming building only a solid rock, outwardly carved into that appearance.

A botanist with a conscience will understand the saying, that no weeds grow on earth except in the heart of man.

A fierce polemic often pulls down the temple, in order to build a fortified wall for the defence of its site against all profane invaders. What worse could they have done to it? But if he merely uses the sacred shields and weapons, "armoury of the invincible knights of old," hung in the sanctuary, for the purpose of defending it against destroyers, he does the god service, who, as the *Genius Loci*, will surely fight beside him.

What is the one indispensable quality for a polemic controversialist? Not learning, nor talents, nor orthodoxy, nor zeal. But the spirit of Love, which implies an anxiety to find good in all, and to believe it where we cannot find it. God admits into his courts no advocates hired to see but one side of a question.

We look with wonder at the spectacle which astronomy presents to us, of thousands of worlds and systems of worlds weaving together their harmonious movements into one great whole. But the view of the hearts of men furnished by history, considered as a combination of biographies, is immeasurably more awful and pathetic. Every water-drop of the millions in that dusky stream is a living heart, a world of worlds! How vast, and strange, and sad, and living a thing, he only knows at all who has gained knowledge by

labour, experience, and suffering; and he knows it not perfectly.

All the ordinary intercourse of life is big and warm with poetry. The history of a few weeks' residence in a circle of human beings is a domestic epic. Few friendships but yield in their development and decay the stuff of a long tragedy. A summer day in the country is an actual idyl. And many a moment of common life sparkles and sings itself away in a light song, wounds as the poisoned barb of an epigram, or falls as a heavy mournful epitaph. But in all he who has an ear to catch the sound, may find a continuous underflow of quiet melody, bursting sometimes into chorusses of triumph, sometimes into funereal chants. The reason why these archetypal poems of real life are so often unfit for the use of the poetic artist, is not their want of the true meaning of poetry, but their unsuitableness to the apprehension of any except the few, perhaps the one, immediately concerned. The poet must choose such a sequence of images, as shall make the harmonious evolution of events, and the significance of human life, intelligible and manifest to all, not merely to a few recluse or scattered doers and sufferers.

What an image of the transitoriness and endless reproduction of things is presented by the

gumcistus plant, covered to-day with fresh white flowers, while the earth around it is strewn with those which similarly opened but yesterday. The plant however abides and lasts, although its flowers fall and perish.

Man is a substance clad in shadows.

The firm foot is that which finds firm footing. The weak falters although it be standing upon rock.

Sylburgius is a narrow fierce man, a kind of dark lantern, a mass of iron blast, but still burning hot. With little vision or sense for the outward, and with but weak and scanty sympathies, he wants the awakening and suggesting influences of external beings, which might have given him a consciousness of truths not immediately arising from his own character. As there is no predominance of reflection in his mind, he has not been led to expand and deduce to their full extent the principles he acknowledges. But with some power of insight he sees that there is a Truth to be believed; and with strong zeal he clings to and hugs it as all that he can trust in. Propose to him anything as additional and supplementary to this; and he thinks it something which you would substitute for his own peculiar

possession, and so would rob under pretence of enriching him. And herein is the essence of the man's individuality,—namely, in his view of Truth, as something which can be his property, and under his dominion, and therefore as limited, —for so all property must be,—and cut off from a larger field left open to be divided and possessed by others. He does not discern Truth as rather a Law or a Sovereign Constitution, to which we look up, than as areas of clay and sand which we may mete out and occupy; as the Law of the Land, rather than the Land itself. Hence, in his maintenance of his Faith, there is all the tenacity, the self-assertion, the attitude of resistance, which men display in vindication of their material possessions. Noble art thou, O man, who canst possess Truth as thine own! How far nobler, if thou wouldst be by Truth possessed, and so ennobled by the Sovereign to whom thou owest allegiance.

Every man's follies are the caricature resemblances of his wisdom.

If men were not essentially believing beings, falsehoods could have no effect on them: for a falsehood operates not as known to be false, but only as believed to be true. A falsehood, in its own name and character, is an impudent nothing.

The fictions of the artist are only falsehoods, in so far as they depart from literal and partial truth, in order to attain to the ideal and universal.

A great truth sometimes sets the world in flames; and men afterwards commemorate the stoppage of the conflagration by some such dead monument as that which looks down on London, crowned with a dead brazen resemblance of the active living fire. But in another age the symbol may burst out again with its old life, and the brazen flames become real ones, and kindle the land anew. Even the sepulchral images and signs of truth have a power to suggest and awaken the reality: so framed are men for truth, born into it as their element, vitally akin to it, and sensitive to the least rumour or stir of it. For the consciousness of truth is nothing else but the finding of one's self in one's world, and of one's world in one's self, and of God in all.

God, where the word expresses a mere tradition, custom, premise of a theory, or unknown power, is less than the least of realities; not so much as the African's lock of hair, or bunch of rags, which he calls his fetish; but rather the sound, shadow, or dream of this. When known, believed, loved, reverenced,—vaster than the uni-

verse, nay, than man; more than the Infinite and Eternal, even the Author and Fount of these, and of the reasonable mind that knows them.

They who deride the name of God, are the most unhappy of men, except those who make a trade of honouring Him. And how many of the self-styled, world-applauded holy are mere traffickers in the temple, setting so much present self-denial against so much future enjoyment!

God is the only voluntary Being, to whom we cannot, without absurdity and self-contradiction, attribute aught arbitrary and self-willed. To doubt that we can know and comprehend the principles by which he acts, is to deny both that our reason is a gleam of his light, and that he has ever revealed himself to us at all.

As a sublime statue manifests its maker's thought, so God's creation displays his mind. But conceive that, while the rude mass is shaped into the lineaments of a man, it grows more and more conscious of the advancing work, so that each new outward line and trait is accompanied by a new and livelier inward sense of the artist's design, and consequently of his character; and

we have a faint image of the scheme which the history of the world unfolds.

We are indeed clay in the hands of the potter; but what a weight of new meaning, what a revolutionary transmutation, transorganization of the whole image arises, when we only add, in one word, that we are conscious clay. I may mould a plastic lump of earth or putty in my fingers for an hour, shaping it into a hundred forms, a cube, a ball, a crescent, a pyramid. At last the fancy seizes me to give it the semblance of a child; and at the moment when I have rudely shaped the limbs, they begin to heave and glow with life; the lips breathe; the faint eyes open, and fix on me with a gaze of thought and emotion. I thrill with fearful joy and awe. Is the clay to me any longer a mass, which I can mould and juggle with at pleasure? Alas! it is now a sacred, an immeasurable thing, itself a man, almost a god. Its sensations quiver on into my heart. I am no longer a potter,—but a parent.

There is one class of men, in whom the higher powers of insight, love, and faith appear to want a sufficient apparatus of the meaner faculties, the quick perception and sturdy boldness required for working in this world of work. There are

others of whom the reverse is true. They are Torsoes,—trunks and arms, but no heads. They have quick apprehension and ready vigour; but in the higher movements of the spirit are confused, inert, crippled. The business of life for each is to supply what each wants, to strengthen the deep roots for the nourishment of the apparent and excessive branches, and to take care that the hidden and imperishable root shall struggle forth into the production of adequate stem and boughs, leaves, blossoms, and fruit. So each may murmur peacefully in the breeze, and calmly shade the soil; and each shall wave amid the storms with the roar of all its awakened being, —brows, and a mantled head, dark with mysterious umbrage, propped upon an unshaken and columnar stem.

Lies are the ghosts of truths,—the masks of faces.

Dulcidius is an extreme example of a kind of man not uncommon in an age like ours, of hectic, flatulent sympathies, and preter-human humanities. He shuts his eyes to all that annoy him, or would, if noticed, annoy him, in the existence of mankind; and you can work him no sorer injury than to say or do anything which disturbs his waking dream. If men are not exempt from

labours and sorrows, yet, in his eyes, they ought to be; and we must cheat ourselves and others with the pleasant delusion that it really is so, and must forget the miseries which we cannot altogether escape from. In face of the gravest calamities and toils, he turns away his head with a wink and smirk, as if to let us know that he is in the secret, and that these horrors are but empty bugbears to frighten children. With a harlequin's leap, and a clown's grin, he whisks out of the throng and press and fierce contention, and chirps or chatters, that, if people would only stand still, or lounge about and sip sugar and water, all evils under the sun would disappear. If men stare with blank consternation at the spot of a shipwreck or a massacre, he tries to draw off their attention, and raise their spirits with a puppet-show or a penny-trumpet. And to one wrestling in the agonies of conscience, or nerved for severe and heroic effort, he proposes, with an air of the jauntiest kindliness, the relaxation of a farce, a masquerade, or a stroll in a green field. On this earth, where men so often wander amid graves and charnel-houses and hospitals, wrapped in funeral mantles,—or stand upon the lonely stormy ridges, sentinels armed for fight,—he skips along with a Jew's harp and a smelling bottle, as if these were divine preservatives, Moly and Hæmony, against all sense of ill and danger. Say to him, that, after all

his quips and gentlenesses, a living foot of blood and bone must have something firmer than cobwebs pearled with dew to stand upon, and must spurn those who would deny it any better support, and he is not indignant,—he is too soft and sweet a thing for that,—but fretted and hurt with a sense of undeserved wrong, and is unhappy till he has accomplished a formal reconciliation, to be celebrated with a hetacomb of sugar-plums.

In support of his filagree and tinsel fancies, Dulcidius has no lack of arguments, which sound plausible and specious, and bubble over with ingenuity and prettiness. But his reasonings buzz and twinkle like summer flies, and, after all, leave each of them only a puny speck of dirt behind. Would not one fancy that he is some wealthy fop, who has never known the pressure of difficulty? Yet he has had his pains and crosses, has lost an arm and an eye; and with a face seamed with heavy wrinkles, and a head of snow-white hair, he goes prating and quirking and simmering and flaunting away, in all the good-humoured vacancy of a milliner's girl in the midst of her shreds and gauzes, or a doating country barber with his soap-froth and gossip. What stern hard fierceness, what fantastic bigotry would be as melancholy and repulsive, as the sight of this dreary baseless levity, and tawdry benevolence!

So says the high and pure, but somewhat narrow and haughty moralist. But is there not another side to the question? In a world where there are grains of dust, as well as mountains, and where the thistle-down hangs upon the oak, may there not be room for weak and trivial men, beside the noblest and most earnest? A fool with cap and bells may jingle away his life at the elbow of Rome-crowned Charlemagne. There are doubtless hours of desperate conflict for the gravest interests of mankind, when the slight and empty spirits are necessarily trampled down like sparrows' eggshells, or swept away like sparrows' feathers, by the holy will of the hero and the prophet. The chaff must fly, when the storm blows; and the frogs of the pool, when its waters redden with blood of men, are squelched unpitied under the hoofs of the war-horses. So be it: for it must be so. But in quiet times, and the long interspaces of history, there is leave and license for the growth of weeds, and weedlike creatures, which also have their use. For this weed is an old woman's remedy, and that a child's plaything. The idle creepers grow up round the grey stone effigy for a century; but when the hour comes, and the figure feels new life, and wakes and starts, and flashes out with eyes and sword, it snaps the fettering growth like worsted threads, and they perish rightfully. Yet while the poor and puffed-up worthlessness of our neighbour does no more

harm than offend our more serious thoughts, or jar on our sensitive retiredness, it is justice to pardon him, and charity to endeavour to feel with him, and help him on. Fireflies are not stars; but neither are they mere nothings. We cannot steer by them; we must not worship them; but we need not crush them. The smallest, paltriest human creature may have pains and conflicts to maintain himself, even in his small paltriness, equal for him to the inward strivings of a Luther or a Shakspere.

There are looks and gestures of quiet unheard-of women,—a housekeeper, a governess, a sodden washerwoman,—and of men as commonplace as any whom Holborn, or Manchester, or May Fair generates, in which a thoughtful eye will read tragedies to draw deeper bitterer tears, than Shakspere's Othello, Goethe's Tasso, or all the woes of Euripides. I have stood in a group of peasants before a painted Crucifixion; and there were looks of sympathy which mine perhaps reflected. But I heard a hard heavy breathing behind me; and turning I saw a woman who had brought her sorrows thither, not found them there. She stood with dull and heavy eyes beholding the painted grief of the Holy Virgin Mother. I never knew what was her calamity. She too doubtless was mourning for a son, perhaps

for his crimes. But I felt that to me sublime religion and perfect art were nothing, while I saw so close to me a living genuine misery.

The forests of utterance, with all their rustling raving seas of leaves, grow out of the deep and silent soil, the immeasurably deep, boundlessly silent bosom of old earth. Yet the living utterances are better than the sublime silence; but for which also they could not be.

If men's reason were laid to sleep, no doubt they would do by instinct many more than at present of the things to which instinct is equal. The instinctive powers are lost sight of under the presence of the rational consciousness, as the stars disappear in sunshine. Hence we may explain some of the startling ingenuities of savages. But the delights and capacities of the conscious spirit, instinct never can supply. For instinct is intelligence incapable of self-consciousness.

Whatever has been seen of Fair and Excellent was first conceived in the sacred darkness of the Unseen. But because vitally, irrepressibly fair and excellent, therefore must it needs go forth, and so be seen in its true beauty.

It is not a part, small or great, but the very whole of a man's work, having within himself (as all have) a world of dusky unembodied greatness, to bring this to utterance, first within his heart, clearly, honestly, and therefore, as must needs be, slowly, and next, at ripe seasons, and with due precautions, by bold unconquerable flaming mouth and deed outwardly to utter it. His utterance must be this thing, and no other, which he has truly, intimately found within himself. Often this cannot to himself be altogether clear and evident, till he has begun to impart it. And thus, as the whole race of man is still but individual man multiplied and completed, so all human history is but the striving towards full and mature utterance of that dark and seething reality, which lies hidden and more or less turbulent in every breast. But as the true utterance of all the Truth is the work and consummation of man's life, so the false utterance of the true, or the true utterance of the false, is, in one form or other, the whole of what is ruinous, chaotic, execrable.

Further, it is manifest that, at the highest point to which man can reach, there will always be something beyond him, higher, larger, holier, which he cannot yet utter, and can only yearn towards and apprehend. This is necessarily the greatest of all greatnesses, which he,—not as yet knows, but knows of, forebodes, dreamingly clutches. To hurry headlong towards the ex-

pression of this, which lies as yet altogether inexpressible, profanes and mars the divine work, —with regard to it now the only divine work possible,—of learning, feeling, embracing, not apprehending, but comprehending it. Unseasonable idle speech,—and such upon this matter all must be,—scares and irritates the plastic gods, the high working powers in all; for whom the universe and our lives are a pliant material, and with whom our will is at its best a patient and devout fellow-worker and learner. Hence the meaning and sanctity of Silence. But that same mute mysterious development, which may be going on for years and decads of years in any one soul, and for ages on ages in the soul of man, comes out at last to inevitable utterance; and the word of some one heart expresses for a thousand years after him the feeling of countless millions. Thus do we find that the utterance of Truth out of the infinite into the heart of man makes his real inward story; and the utterance of the same out of his heart into the world is all his outward work and duty.

All the instruments that men employ are so many symbols, and, as it were, materializations of corresponding faculties; as the works which, by means of these instruments, we perform, are expressions of our analogous tendencies, affections,

and wants. The knife not only divides all separable substances, but exhibits, and, as it were, prolongs into the outermost region of things about us, that dividing faculty, of which the rending hands are intermediate agents. So the lever, that is, lifter, embodies and applies our inward capacity of elevating, and consummates the work of our arms and shoulders. The rope which knots two things together, is but the permanent gripe of one long tenacious finger, which does not relax when the flesh fingers fall loose in weariness or sleep; and it thus displays and exemplifies the uniting power inherent in men's spirits. But as these physical tools can work only with the palpable and visible, and the spirit has another world of its own, neither to be touched nor seen by means of the bodily senses, there must, in this inner and better region, be kindred operations, in which the powers that the material images manifest and apply, work for themselves and without tools. Thus to separate by mental scission is to distinguish; to tie or lash together is, in the region of mere thought, to combine notions or conceptions by an act of fancy; and to lift is, in the language of oracles, to raise an object out of dark and flat confusion into clear and individual existence, that is, to realize it for the mind. Now in proportion as men use many and complete tools, they are advanced in mechanical civilization. But their higher spiritual cul-

ture has been forwarded only in the degree in which they have learnt the true laws and aims of these inward powers, which are at once the main-springs and the archetypes of all our instruments.

If man be a reality, no empty vision in the dreaming soul of nature, but,—as who shall doubt he is?—inwardly substantial and personal, that which he most earnestly desires, which best satisfies his whole being, must be real too.

Only by an act of arbitrary self-will dare we fancy that we belong to a system founded on the arbitrary self-will of any Being, however superior to us in power.

The fundamental affirmation of all reasonable, and therefore of all right religion, the highest of truths revealed to man, is this, that the Infinite, Eternal, and Absolute Being wills all good, and only good; and that by good is meant not merely whatever we may dare to fancy he might choose to will, but that which suits the wants, and in the fullest form completes the existence of all other beings. Every doctrine opposed to this is superstitious fanaticism, or blasphemous scoffing.

That men would be better than they are, if they always chose good instead of evil, is evident. But that they would be better, or indeed could have a rational existence, if they had not the power of choosing evil instead of good, is the most foolish and presumptuous of fancies.

You may indeed add sugar to vinegar, but cannot make it wine again.

A man without earnestness is a mournful and perplexing spectacle. But it is a consolation to believe, as we must of such a one, that he is in the most effectual and compulsive of all schools; not only with the sad sublimity of the stars above him, and the haggard yet ever teeming earth beneath his feet, graves, houses, and temples around him, and the voices of hatred and pain, love and devotion, sounding in his ears, but also with a heart, however weak and dull, essentially capable of feeling and understanding the meaning of all these things. He is at worst a boy, slow at learning to read, and thinking more of toys and cakes than of books, but assuredly neither an idiot, nor incurably deaf, blind, and dumb. He is horrid and disastrous to look upon, as we pass him by, but most when we see him coloured by the crimson glare of our own passionate vehemence.

Every step forward which we really make, gives us a new mysterious power to draw him too on.

Voltaire thought he was looking through a handsome French window at God and the universe, and painting pictures of them, while in truth the glass was a mirror, and he saw and copied only his own scoffing face.

The religion of all Pagans indiscriminately has often been written of by zealous Christians in the worst spirit of Paine and Voltaire.

Whether is it nobler to dwell in Paradise and dream of a cabbage-garden, or to live among pot-herbs and believe in Paradise?

Seldom does a truly divine poet arise and teach all the poor toiling men in the land, how far nobler an epic is the life of every one of them,—did he but know it,—than that of the imaginary Ulysses. The Odyssee is but the little that a man could learn, fancy, and feign of the life of a man. How far is this excelled by the all that the life of a man,—of every man,—is!

It is no uncommon mistake to suppose that exaggeration is essential or at least proper to fiction. The truth is rather the reverse. A principal use and justification of fiction is to reduce and harmonize the seeming exaggerations of real life.

Facts are often extravagant and monstrous, because we do not know the whole system which explains and legitimizes them. But none have any business in fiction, which are not intelligible parts of the artificial whole they appear in.

Religion, conscience, affection, law, science, poetry, including the kindred arts, are for ever rectifying the disorders and miseries of mankind. But the mode in which the poetic art does this, is by presenting a mankind, a world of its own, in which good and evil, true and false, fair and ugly, harmonious and discordant, and all such analogous pairs of contrasts, are mingled by just and intelligible principles of combination, and point to their own solution,—not indeed a solution always for the understanding, but always one adequate for the feelings, and purifying and exalting them.

Faith in a better than that which appears, is no less required by art than by religion.

The three great perversions of education are those which tend to make children respectively,—Dwarfs,—Monkies,—Puppets. The Dwarfs are the prodigies, the over-sharpened, over-excited, over-accomplished, stunted men. In these, as there is no fulness and steadiness, such as belong only to mature life, and yet there is the appearance of them, the very principle of the thing is a quackery and falsehood. The Monkies are the spoilt, the indulged petted creatures of mere self-will and appetite, in whom the human, as distinguished from the animal, is faint and undeveloped. The weakness of mind, which trains such children and delights in them, is that which led the ladies of another generation to keep natural and genuine apes for their amusement. The Puppets are produced by the plan of deadening, petrifying the mind, teaching words by rote, compelling obedience for its own sake, and not for that of a future moral freedom. These are the things that move in public only as the wires of masters and committees guide. But, because the life cannot be altogether crushed and turned back, it asserts itself secretly in a sense of benumbed misery and corroding hatred. The first class spoken of are those in whom a true ideal is misapplied. The second, those in whom none is aimed at. The third, those in whom the ideal pursued is altogether false and wretched.

Speech is as a pump, by which we raise and pour out the water from the great lake of Thought,—whither it flows back again.

There is a kind of social civilization, which rounds the rough and broken stones into smooth shapeliness, but also into monotonous uniformity. There is also a farther and better kind, which again roughens the pebbles, not however to reproduce their former rude diversities, but to engrave them with divine heads and figures and significant mottoes.

When we see the place to which some natural Reality is degraded by the hands of man,—the stately tree to be a dead wayside post, the fierce and fleet wild ass of the desert to be a broken and starved drudge,—we cannot but reflect that this wreck was once great and goodly, and possessed a wondrous inward endowment of independent life and power, was born out of the eternal Infinite into the sad and narrow round of Time, where men, its fellow-denizens of Time, have thus crushed and ruined it. But poor as is the place and function of each living thing which men enchain and use, when thus no longer existing for and by itself, yet the human order of existence, with all its wants and contrivances, is an immeasurably higher one, than any of the systems to which the

weaker, meaner beings of earth originally belong. In this superiority of Man's destiny and rights lies the justification of his subjecting to his own purposes that which, for its purposes, he thus frustrates and dislocates.

All France under Louis XIV. was beaten and bribed into courtiership. Poetry, Law, Theology, all wore court-suits, and smoothed themselves into flatterers and liars. The Muses became maids of honour and stage-confidantes to royal mistresses; Religion was only permitted to appear masked in the abhorred disguise of a state-chaplain, or a gold-laced trumpeter of sovereign worthlessness; and Truth and Conscience in the mean while were fasting at Port Royal, pining in the Bastile, fighting in the Cevennes, or emigrating to Spital-fields. Honesty could not have where to lay its head, when Falsehood, Cruelty, and insane Vanity had for their lacquies and pimps Racine, Bossuet, and Molière. The Regent Orleans was but Louis XIV. in undress, and half-intoxicated; and Louis XV. the same type, drunk to stupidity. But, while the family was sinking from generation to generation into utter lethargy, the nation was awakening from its sleep; till rising, and finding itself starved, bruised, and shackled, it burst the remaining bonds, and strangled for ever the corpse-like royalty which it found lying beside it.

Life of any kind is a confounding mystery; nay, that which we commonly do not call life, the principle of existence in a stone or a drop of water, is an inscrutable wonder. That in the infinity of Time and Space any thing should be, should have a distinct existence, should be more than nothing! The thought of an immense abysmal Nothing is awful, only less so than that of All and God: and thus a grain of sand, being a fact, a reality, rises before us into something prodigious, immeasurable,—a fact that opposes and counterbalances the immensity of non-existence. And if this be so, what a thing is the life of man, which not only is, but knows that it is; and not only is wondrous, but wonders!

The beauty of physical Nature strikes us with an immediate impression of harmony and completeness. There is also a sense of harmony, the result of reflection engaged on scientific truth. And there is a livelier and deeper consciousness of the same kind, in which our personal sympathies and reverential awe of all personality are combined with the feeling of the beautiful, excited by whatever is fair elevated and harmonious in human will and character. In the aspect of the highest human beauty, the immediate impression produced by physical (that is, involuntary) Nature is inseparably united with this last or sympathetic emo-

tion; and the mere beauty of form and colour is regarded as symbolic of the inward and supersensuous loveliness. On the other hand, in the visions of outward things, the evening or nightly sky, the meditative melancholy of a silent autumnal landscape, the blue sea rolling its foam into a rocky bay, the virgin shamefacedness of Nature in forest nook, we spontaneously transfer in feeling and language something of a purely human quality to that which is properly below the human, but unchangeably connected with it, and pierced in all directions and bound together by the roots of our nobler life.

We paint our lives in fresco. The soft and fusile plaster of the moment hardens under every stroke of the brush into eternal rock.

Pain has its own noble joy, when it kindles a strong consciousness of life, before stagnant and torpid.

The more sides a man has to his mind, the more certain he may be of receiving blows on all of them from one party or other.

Persons immediately and universally recognized

as laudable must be either in the main negative characters, or capable of practising a good deal of falsehood and spurious sympathy in their intercourse with others.

For a weak man to sympathize with weakness is easy, as for a strong man to sympathize with strength. But it is hard for the weak to sympathize with the strong; far harder for the strong to sympathize with the weak, to bow down to weakness, and to say to it, *Be thou my better strength.*

The candles of man's night are doubtless burning out; but, like Alfred's candle-clocks, their decay measures the wearing on of the night itself. When they sink into the socket, lo! it is not dark, but day.

The Caliph Omar, who destroyed the Alexandrian library, the second in succession from Mahomet, and under whom many empires, and Jerusalem itself, were added to Islam, was journeying on the borders of the Egyptian desert, and heard of the fame of a holy and wise hermit, who lived retired in a cave of the rocks amid the sandy waste. Him he resolved to visit, hoping to learn from him where was concealed the buried

treasure of the old idolatrous Kings of Egypt. When the Caliph, attended by several tall and dark Arabs, and by Amrou, the conqueror of Egypt, entered the cavern, he found the hermit seated on a rude bench at a stone table, which supported a written volume. His eyes were bent downwards, as if in thought rather than study; and the Arabs were surprised to see a man of low stature, with long, silvery hair floating round a face, not like theirs, tawny and scorched, but smooth and ruddy. The large and light grey eyes were raised at their approach with a look of mild abstraction; and Amrou, who had conversed with many men of wisdom at Alexandria, was struck by the breadth of his head, the clear polish of the forehead, the well-cut and rather small nose, and the large, lightly closed mouth, which seemed to quiver with feeling, and to be ready for the lively utterance of countless wise proverbs and comparisons.

"Sage," said the Caliph, "I see that thou wouldst not approve of the act of justice, by which I have destroyed the storehouse of Pagan errors, called the Library, in the city of Iskander? Thou hast a book before thee; and I see some others in that half-open chest, which do not resemble the Volumes of believers."

"In my youth, O Caliph! I read many books in that Library which thou hast destroyed; and by the study of these, and their clear presence

in my mind, I became capable of sustaining, and even of profiting by this solitude in which I live, without companions and with few writings."

"What profit couldst thou derive from those infidel volumes? The Koran teaches us the one God; and to know him is to know all."

"The Koran indeed teaches truly that there is one God; and because we know that he exists, we should be careful to understand him as displayed in all his works. Of these the noblest is man; and of his mind we have so many several pictures in every book, however mistaken its doctrines. And in books can we also learn more clearly and fully to understand what other works of God, inferior to man, but still most wonderful, reveal his will and power."

"Ah! shameless unbeliever!" exclaimed Omar, and stroked his beard, "now would I order thee to be slain upon the spot, but that I have need of thy wisdom for the good of the faithful, and of the true faith. Tell me where are concealed the riches of the Pharaohs; and I will spare thy life."

"I know not that I can teach thee this; but what I can show thee thou shalt know." Then turning to Amrou, the fierce and conquering general of the Moslem armies—"Fetch me, I pray thee, a handful of sand from the desert, at the mouth of the cave." The warrior started;

and his eyes turned disdainfully on the hermit. But they sank under his quiet gaze; and Amrou went and brought the sand. The hermit received it into his palm, and, turning to the Caliph, desired him to pick out a single grain, and lay it on the blade of Amrou's dagger. The bright weapon, which had so often been red with blood, was drawn from its sheath; and the Caliph held it in his hand. Then, following the hermit alone into the dark interior of the cave, he placed upon the blade held horizontally a single grain of sand. On this he fixed his eyes. In the deep gloom the grain brightened like a spark of fire, and grew larger and larger, even as the brightest planet of evening; and it paused not in its expansion, till it seemed a luminous ball of mild pale fire.

"Look steadily," said the Hermit; "fear not; and tell me what thou seest."

"I see," said the Caliph, "a small goat-skin tent, under the shade of rocks, among palm-trees and wild vines. A man, naked save his girdle, sleeps in the cool, with his head upon a dark and sad-looking woman's lap; and two children are not far off. A thorn has pierced the foot of the infant girl; and the boy, her brother, is endeavouring to draw it from the flesh. Her tears fall upon his cheek; and his hand is red with her blood."

"Look again, and tell me what thou seest."

"I see a mountain covered with trees, fields, and villages, and, by Allah! with Pagan temples. But lo! an earthquake heaves the whole; and half the houses are overthrown or swallowed up. The survivors arm themselves for battle; and a fierce conflict rages for the enjoyment of those of their possessions which remain. Fire spreads through the ruined vineyards, woods, and houses; and by its light many men are slain, and women and children made captives. Some of those combatants, O Dervish, are sons of the giants; and the maidens whom I look upon are lovely as the damsels of Paradise."

"Look now again: what seest thou?"

"A lonely waste. The grey desert spreads far and wide, save where a dark sea beats heavily on its coast. Not a ship, not a camel, not a house is there. But among heaps of carved stones and fallen pillars, such as might build a royal city, a white-haired withered man sits with his eyes upon the ground. A vulture is perched upon a mound near, and looks at him; and a jackal eyes him from a shattered tomb, and gnaws a scull. The wind of the desert has blown the sand over his feet, and almost to his knees; but he cares not to rise to free himself. Dervish! God must have fallen asleep in heaven above that place, and left it to die utterly."

"What dost thou now behold?"

"I see, around a broad bay of the ocean, a

range of green hills with streams and torrents, and gardens reaching to the skies. Amid these are palaces, with pillars built doubtless by the genii; and along the wide terraces, in front of the buildings, sons of wisdom and daughters of beauty are walking or leaning. One is a story-teller, who has gathered round him a crowd of listeners young and old. Another seems to have just shaped a figure of a woman out of stone. She is more than half-naked, but looks as if none dare think her so. On the torch which she holds up in her hand, a flame of green fire burns like a bright star in the sunshine round her. A band of children are wreathing flowers, and laying them before the Pagan image, which, not smiling, seems to delight in their smiles. The workman looks dissatisfied, though rejoicing as a bride-groom who has won his bride, but mourns that he cannot offer her more precious gifts than all his substance. Elsewhere I see living figures glancing among the trees. To the quay which borders the shore, some barks with deep blue sails are hastening; and one even now touches the porphyry wall, and pours out gold and spices,—by Allah! I smell the sweetness of Yamen,—on the smooth stones. Nay, as the sun goes down, I hear the faint song of the mariners, and the music of stringed instruments tinkling in reply from the distant mountain-side."

"Is there nought more than this?"

"Yea, high upon the mountain I see a mosque of another fashion than ours, surrounded by a place of tombs, with many graves and cypresses. High above them all rises a shape, silvery as the flashing of a scymetar, or of water, gigantic, kingly, with a mantled head, and long folds covering his whole form. But he stretches his great moving hands over the palaces and bay; and flakes of fire fall from them, and kindle every window and capital of a pillar, and flash from every face, and shoot again upwards, and beam as stars in the dark sky. The mantled genie looks not like any one of the spirits of the past, but as if they were all combined in him."

"Look once more, O Caliph!"

"Juggler! there is but a grain of sand."

"Thine eyes are weary of looking, not the visions of displaying themselves. Thou canst see no more this day. But, if all this be visible in a grain of sand by the open and fresh eye of man, what sights beyond this thinkest thou must there be in a man himself? Of these sights a portion are in every book recorded."

"Slave!" said the Caliph: "tell me not of books, but of hidden treasures; or I will have thee impaled ere an hour is past."

"I have told thee of far more than thou thoughtest. The treasures of the Pharaohs would show thee little of what thou hast seen in that grain of sand. Farewell, O Caliph! I

have been ordained but to live till I had seen and known thee, and then to depart. In that world where the hearts of men shall be more open to each other than their books are here, it will be read in mine, that I hold thee ignorant and headstrong, but still a man, and therefore capable of good. Farewell! I am but a grain of sand; hide my corpse under those of the desert before me."

The hermit sank on the rocky floor of the cave at Omar's feet, quite dead.

SAYINGS AND ESSAYINGS.

AN unproductive truth is none. But there are products which cannot be weighed even in patent scales, nor brought to market.

It is an old discovery that man passes from knowledge to doubt, and thence again attains to knowledge. But it is a vulgar error, to suppose that we return not only to the same knowledge, but in the same forms, and under the same limitations as before.

All religion implies that the universe is a system of essential good, not evil. And this in spite of experience, which acquaints us with nothing but a mixture, in larger or smaller proportions, of good and evil, neither of them at any time pure from some ingredient of the other. Thus the great general axiom of all higher than Pagan religion is the existence of an Absolute which transcends experience. No philosophy which teaches this can, without danger of calumny, be called irreligious.

Of a mere chaos, blank ignorance would be the only corresponding image in the soul. Of a mere hell, an unchecked appetite of hatred would

be the proper counterpart in man. All knowledge contradicts the one view, all goodness the other. The energies of life in all men work in opposition to both falsehoods, and take for granted their emptiness. But the clear insight and mature conscientiousness of the wise man realize the complete victory over all doubt of truth, and all self-abandonment to evil.

The true idea of a philosopher, and that which, dimly apprehended, has been the cause of the universal reverence, even if only a reverential hatred, connected with the name, is,—a man who discerns an Absolute Truth more clearly than others, and is thus enabled to found on it a scientific, that is, systematic construction of all knowledge. To this idea is directly opposed that of a man whose aim is to establish the uncertainty of all things,—who is certain only that we can know nothing certainly. To this class of thinkers belong not merely Pyrrhonists, that is, the dealers in lazy and captious frivolities of speculation, but all who maintain, however zealously and consistently, that we know nothing beyond appearances, —all who teach that truth is endowed with a positive value and certainty, but only in reference to us, who are essentially fallible, as having in ourselves no measure or organ of the Absolute. Of such men Locke, though often inconsistent,

and sometimes suggesting a higher belief than he could clearly understand, is on the whole the great modern master. But from this it by no means follows,—nor is it at all true,—that he and his most decided followers have asserted nothing but error as to the mode in which our conceptions arise and are associated and generalized. On the contrary his writings, and those of others who pursue the same method, abound in ingenious and undeniable explanations of many phenomena of consciousness. Their error,—when a philosopher of a higher and more genuine school must believe them in error,—is in the denial of any deeper ground of conviction in man, than that which can be reduced to the impressions of objects, and the manufacture of these into conceptions and sequences of conceptions.

The belief in an Absolute Truth discernible by man, under whatever conditions, is the common ground of all constructive, all religious philosophies; by which they are contradistinguished from all the schemes which would reduce the objects of knowledge to an accidental and relative medley of facts, and the powers of knowing to implements produced by no previous high necessity of reason, and of which we can only say that here they are,—and neither why nor whence. The enquiries of the empirical analysts pursued,

as they may be, with serious devotion to truth, have yet so strong a tendency to deaden and choke up the inlets for all higher suggestions, that the affirmation of an absolute reality discernible by man seems to such a one, when at all accomplished in his own method, no better than the conceits of children, or the dreams of sleepers. If any one take this view, it is utterly impossible to refute him; for his theory does perfectly well explain all the facts that he acknowledges, or can be led to apprehend. If he once make up his mind that human existence is nothing better than the frightful farce, which on his scheme it appears to men of larger and more aspiring souls,—what can be said, but that he must make the best of the world which he has chosen for himself?

The Absolute Truth of the philosopher has doubtless never been apprehended by the mass of mankind, as divested of innumerable arbitrary and often absurd adjuncts. Yet there are few who have not been visited by some faint and broken image of an unchangeable Ground, an eternal Reason, an inexhaustible Fount of Life, a pure Love, a perfect Will, a universal God; though doubtless even Christianity has as yet communicated a clear, devout, mature knowledge of this idea to but a small portion of those who

profess it. The verdict of the multitude, ignorant as they are, first of what they do mean, and secondly of what they ought to mean, is on the whole in favour of a Reality of Truth. But the seer who does know what he affirms, has a certainty which votes and adherents cannot augment nor deniers take away. Seeing the truth in itself as it is, he cannot but know that he sees it, and would still possess this insight, though he were the one among a thousand millions who believed that man is more than a phantom of the night.

Any fool, much more any score of fools, can kill the wisest of men. Yet history teaches nothing, if not this, that the final estimation which decides all conflicts, is by weight, not tale.

A self-complacent horror of mysticism in speculation is apt to be the mark of him who cannot see at all, what the mystic sees obscurely.

How often is the meaning of any appearance not only different from, but the very reverse of what it seems! Pursue this contrast to its source; and we are not far from the highest truth of speculation.

The greatest instance of the opposition of the Apparent and the Real is found in the world

itself as a whole, which presents to us a mass of fluctuating atoms, and yet reveals an Eternal Oneness, as its true origin and life.

Most English persons of liberal education would say that the primary question in philosophy is this,—whether the human mind has, or has not any capacities, but those of sensation, memory, and association; or, in other words, whether from these alone all knowledge and all principles of action are derived? This would perhaps be the statement of those who take either the one or the other side in the controversy. A man of a deeper, ampler, and, as it is called among us, a more mystical mind, than can be looked for among men of business and of fashion, would say that philosophy starts from the assumption of a power in man to arrive at the knowledge of an Absolute Truth, on which the particular truths of experience depend, and from which they receive their explanation. The teacher of association and similar processes, as solving all mysteries into mere commonplaces, says that the sensation of bitter or sweet cannot be imparted by words to him who has not experienced it. So the believer in a fontal reality, above all phenomena, and their generalized laws, says that the intuition of this, and the accompanying conviction of its indubitableness, cannot

be conveyed by mere verbal teaching, and requires a training of the affections, imagination, and will, as well as the understanding, in order to bring it within our reach. Only the one asserts that there is nothing in man, which is not obvious in all men; the other, that there is much, and the best, which in most has never distinctly appeared, and shows itself only by vague but unconquerable feeling.

The *reductio ad absurdum*, the triumphant sarcasm of the follower of Locke, commonly amounts to this, that the asserted truth of the visionary enthusiast cannot be stated in terms of the sensations, and their images and associated results, without manifest self-contradiction, and that therefore it is a mere lunacy. But this is only a ridiculous conclusion from a statement, which is essential to the very case of the transcendentalist. For it is his allegation, that there is such a truth as cannot be conveyed, except in language which must appear an inane jargon to all who resolve existence into a *nothing but*. Yet it would be absurd to deny that Hobbes, Locke, and Berkeley, Hume, Hartley, Brown, and one in acuteness, clearness, and coherence, equal to any of these, the late James Mill, have given, not only very ingenious, but quite adequate expositions of many phenomena of consciousness,

while admitting only the scantiest premises and *data*. On laying down their volumes, and especially the *Analysis of the Human Mind* by the last and most consistent of these writers, it is hard not to feel for a time as if, after all, men might be a mere bundle of these dry sticks thus neatly fitted and tied together. But at last, to any one who has habitually breathed a more devout air, and lived in the belief that there is something above, which we can never do more than look up to, the old faith of sages, and poets, and saintly hearts, nay, that of the great multitude of civilized men, however blundered and distorted by them, returns with power. We thus find in the conviction that there is an Absolute Truth and good, however diversely manifested to different lands and generations, a depth and strength, a sufficiency for the demands of the reason, which no small psychological theory can explain, and which therefore none should be allowed to explain away. Must we then say that truth is inconsistent with itself, and that the analysis of phenomena by Hartley or Mill, though irrefutable, must be set aside, because it is discordant from the belief in a supersensual and eternal Idea? Assuredly not. But we may admit by far the greater part of what is positive in their teaching, and yet hold that they merely explain the process, by which sensations, images, and associations build up the mass of common thoughts and feelings, which neverthe-

less must rest at last on a deeper and more permanent foundation.

Man's actual knowledge may easily be measured. His ignorance is for him unfathomable: he is ignorant of the extent of his ignorance. But on the other hand his knowledge, were it but the conscious certainty of the difference between odd and even numbers, or of the idea of a circle, proves that existence is essentially knowable by him, and that he has the capacity for knowing it altogether. Our ignorance is immense, but not entire. All actually share in it; but it is not constitutive, universal, characteristic of the race. Knowledge is all these. It, with all its infinity, surrounds us, calls us, belongs to us, is ideally ours. Not only the child, the peasant, the sage are ignorant. So also are the insentient stone, the unmoving plant, the unreflecting animal. Man like these is ignorant: but it is his crowning distinction that he knows himself to be so, as having in his knowledge a standard which proves him ignorant.

Contented ignorance of that which we may know, has a no less deplorable likeness to the condition of brutes, than the most obvious brutalities to which we degrade our nature.

Often has it been said, far oftener indistinctly felt, that nothing is more really inconsistent with the spirit of true morality, than the affected parade of buckram severity. Thus the corrupt exaggeration of prudes fastens as a stain on the soul the tint which might otherwise have been but a play of shadow. In such a tone of mind,—and how much of it is there in England, especially in England's moral self-complacency!—it is plain that the want of inward life betrays itself by the prurient excess of life on the surface. A careless unconscious ease of soul as to trifles arises naturally from the habitual presence of that spirit of free purity and generosity, which alone can render any human life really moral, under the paint. That is only a fit and meritable contrast to the stiff and bitter pedantry of duty, which is presented in the emphatic licences and naked orgies of genial blackguardism, such as has not wanted eulogists among us. In the former case the dirt is frozen into lumps, and may be handled with less defilement. In the other it is liquid, rank, and steaming, and gives one at least the hope that it may flow down its proper channels into some congenial abyss. Still all is dirt alike; and the less that any one meddles with it, save those to whom such work belongs, the better for himself and for those who happen to pass to windward of him. But in this country, and in our age, the extremes of wanton self-indulgence are far less in fashion, and there-

fore less need to be denounced, than the acrid and noxious pretences of those who overcharge their mimicry of conscience, because they know nothing of the reality.

The genius of the age, meaning its characteristic tendency, is not a phrase so unlike, as it seems at first sight, to that of the genius of a man, namely, the highest thought that inspires him and marks him out from the crowd. Genius, in the one expression, means indeed something like temper or character,—in the other, originality,—the power of realizing the previously unknown, whether in art or science or life. But every generation has genius in the higher sense, though every man has not. That is to say, every generation has a feeling that, in some direction or other before it, there lies an infinite unknown reality, towards which it must work, and which promises it endless triumphs and immeasurable rewards. This feeling is never a deception; for it points to a universe of wonder, which does not merely lie before us, on this side or that, but encompasses us on all; though generally it is but through some one vista that any age or man can discern and effectually approach it. Thus too there is something of genius in all children, who are distinguished from adults in nothing more than in this, that their world, being so much smaller than ours,

seems to them so much larger than ours appears to most of us. But all the higher emotions bring, to all who experience them, something of the tremulous joy and sublime anticipations of creative genius. What mother has not felt this, bending over her child? What lover, looking along the path on which he has seen, or hopes to see, the woman he loves?

In a practical country like ours, that is, one where almost all the energies of almost all energetic minds are employed in outward work of some kind, a man of a different temper and tendencies is not only hampered and wounded by endless discordances in his life with that of all around him; but finding no sympathy, and no public at one with him, he is perpetually driven into doubt of the reality and worth of the objects, which alone can satisfy his deepest feelings, and suitably engage his best faculties. A philosopher in England has the discomfort of an eagle in darkness, while he is held to be an owl in daylight. Wretched therefore is he, if his philosophy be but that of the head, and does not so strengthen and purify his heart, as to sustain him against neglect, solitude, the mistrust and sorrow of his friends, and the loud revilings of all who fancy any difference of pursuits and affections from theirs to be an intentional outrage against them.

In fact, in opposing ourselves to the stream of things, which we cannot altogether escape from, our only justification must be a love of truth, inseparable from a knowledge of it, which brings still more of inward consolation than of outward trial.

It is a melancholy thing, when any one who professes devotion to the pure service of wisdom, and who must know how few as yet imagine that there is such a vocation for man, at the same time complains fretfully of the indifference and injustice of the world. If wisdom is not better than the world of to-day, why not serve the world, instead of wisdom? If it is, why complain of the exchange, by which you have been so much the gainer? The jewel hidden under the sand of the desert laments not its dark and silent lot. The sand lies open to the sun and dews, and to the feet of the ostrich, the antelope, the camel, and of all unclean beasts. The jewel is concealed, because it is, not because it is not, precious. When the true day comes, which will consign the dust to neglect, it will be owned and honoured; and at all events to be a spark of diamond is more than to be a grain of sand.

The helve of the hatchet disputed against the blade, which was the worthier? *Nay*, said the

wise raven,—which listened to the argument, and had not spoken for a thousand years before,—*the steel will hew a hundred handles for itself; but the hundred handles could never shape one blade.*

The tone of the perfectly well-bred, that is, of those who, with a natural aptitude for refinement, have been in circumstances to attain its best graces and accomplishments, has a charm, which many can feel who do not possess it. Only those do not imagine it, who have no sense for the beautiful in action, and for the quiet expressiveness of complete cultivation. The perception of its value will not enable any man to reach it by dint of industry and talents. He must join to the tendencies, which are a gift from Heaven, the good fortune of long and familiar intercourse, even from his youth, with a circle of persons to whom finished politeness is habitual, and thus involuntary. In the highest classes there is many a man who has not this recommendation. But that, among persons of eminent social position, there is not a higher average of good manners, a milder general climate of demeanour, than among the mass of those whose main purpose in life is labour, however ingenious for outward ends,—none but the very ignorant would be bold enough to pretend. How far this superiority is counterbalanced by inconveniences in other respects, moral or in-

tellectual, is another question. The class that most commonly decides the matter in its own favour, viz., the clever and well-informed of the professional and mercantile rank, though probably they may be on the whole the best among us, are certainly by no means free from bias, or at all peculiarly aware of those defects of their own, which must be weighed against the mischiefs of aristocratic habits. On the whole, no doubt, in the highest life of England, as compared with the middling, there is more of the smaller, and less of the larger morals. For leisure, and ample and constant means of enjoyment, are less favourable to virtue and wisdom, than to manners and taste. Only, be it remembered, that good manners and good taste are, so far as their influence reaches, hostile, not friendly, to vice and folly.

Evil in modern education, as in modern life, generally takes the form of meanness, weakness, and rottenness in the substance and core, with a tricksy sensual varnish on the surface.

While the labour and urgency of life are directed to mere worldly ends, the relaxations and ornaments will naturally also be governed by a taste for the showy and luxurious,—for that which produces the utmost display, with the least value.

The striving of modern fashionable education is to make the character impressive; while the result of good education, though not the aim, would be to make it expressive.

It would be unjust to deny that in our age there is a far wider diffusion of humanity, tolerance, information, smooth manners, and pleasing accomplishments, than there ever was before in the world. But this very improvement makes the task of life, and therefore of training life, more difficult. For these things are all the light and movable material of manhood, not the vital organizing strength. Yet they have in themselves a reality of good; only it seems much greater than it is. We are thus tempted to make them substitutes for a law, a religion, which they in fact require in order to direct them. While these glimmerings of a higher truth augment and brighten round us, there is more and harder work for the conscience and will, for the main wheel of the character to do, in keeping right so much that was unknown in simpler times, and which yet in our time we have no business to relinquish.

There is a tendency in modern education to cover the fingers with rings, and at the same time to cut the sinews at the wrist.

No wonder that in the devil's market a large nut-shell, with a maggot in it, passes for more than a small one, which is whole and sound;—that oranges are cultivated by his gardeners to have the finest skins, and no juice;—and that in his picture-galleries frames inclosing nothing, and sheets of varnish with no forms seen in them, but the reflection of the spectator, hold the place of true delineations.

One sometimes sees others than Irishmen, when they want to have a vehicle for use, make their barrow as large as possible, and fill it with a heap of goods, but only forget one thing,—the wheel. Now, as a big wheel-barrow without a wheel, so is a man full of talk and cleverness and success, but without a character, and a principle higher than himself, on which the character depends.

A man must have bread to live on, bread growing in the fields around him, ground in a mill, and baked in an oven within his reach. Dust indeed he may find, without having it sown or reaped or ground or baked for him; and a traveller may tell him of fruits and viands much better than bread, to be found in India or the Moon: but the dust will not feed him, nor the

name of pine-apples and nectar serve him for dinner. So is it with our need of religion. Worldly maxims of prudence and knowledge will not do as a substitute; and philosophy, which, to be comprehensive and lasting, must be religious philosophy, is for all but a few as airy as the rumour of a magic garden, and the tale of lunar feasts and quintessential potations.

The worst education, which teaches self-denial, is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not that.

Mere benevolence is little better than worthless, as a first principle of life. To love men, without knowing what we are to love in them, is a moral appetite, which may easily be too indiscriminate. Faith must stand first, the trustful insight into a truth which shows what we are to love, and why: otherwise the love ends in a melancholy dream. It is the mere moonshine of the mind, which, if genuine, and not a stage-carpenter's tallow moonshine, points to and proves a sunshine, a knowledge and love of good unmingled and pure, and not, as in human beings, muddled with infinite dirt and lies.

It is most true, and most fitting to be said to many in our day, that a man has no business to cut himself off from communion with so rich and manifold a world as ours, or arbitrarily to harden and narrow his life on any of the sides on which it is open and sensitive. But it is also no less necessary, and perhaps in this time more required, to urge that a man's first vocation is to be a man,—a practical, personal being, with a reasonable moral existence, which must be kept strong and in working order, at all expense of pleasure, talent, brilliancy, and success. It is easy to lose one's self, or, as the Scripture has it, one's own soul, in the midst of the many and glittering forms of good, which the world offers, and which our life apprehends. But to know any of these as realities, it is necessary to begin by being real in our own human ground of will, conscience, personal energy. Then will the world also begin to be real for us; and we may go on through eternity mining deeper and deeper, and in endless diversities of direction, in a region of inexhaustible realities. It is not by lying down and dreaming of many roads that we get on. By standing up and actually walking, we find a real road under our feet, which in time will lead us into all the roads that we are capable of knowing. And there are many more than we can ever dream of; for dreams are but the confused remains of what we have known already.

Better a cut finger than no knife. The boy indeed bears the cut finger for the sake of the knife; but a wise parent will often think the cut the real gain, and the knife expedient for the sake of it.

All nature presents to us the spectacle of a divine light, working and moulding twilight shapes in the midst of darkness. But this darkness, out of which all the realities of existence below man rise, is but the want of light. In man the light of God knows itself as light, and shakes off more and more of the darkness mingled with it. But in him there is also, and therefore, a power of thickening the darkness into something far blacker and more palpably dark, than can be found in all the rest of the universe. There it is the want of light, here the corruption of light. And this new mischief, this plague-struck good, takes place in every man, who consciously, as all of us so often do, prefers wrong to right, and the worse rather than the better.

We laugh at the old worshipers of sticks and stones, pot-herbs and onions. Yet these are really good and reasonable things, and display a wise and benign power in the production of them. But soft fashionable sentiment, popular swaggering phrases, arbitrary dogmas, the gene-

ralized lies of proverbial cunning, which pass for truths by being lies comprehensive, are utterly worthless. They are the dregs and scourings of whatever in man is diabolical. Yet these are the true gods of millions, who read tracts, newspapers, and novels. These are the invisible powers, on which they rely, and on which they try to build their existence. For anything I know, an old Egyptian who worshipped a cabbage, may have been less absurd in doing so, than this or that sensitive and fantastic idolater of landscapes and size-coloured daubery, of tinsel talents and melo-dramatic greatness. An Irish peasant, honouring with his mouth a glorified potato, would be performing a more reasonable service than that to which he often submits himself.

From want of reverence may I and my children be preserved! But this prayer is not heartier than that which I offer for preservation from the reverence of hollow notions and smoky dreams, half felt to be lies, while we bow down to them. In singleness of heart to believe and do what highest we know,—how few and simple are the words! yet their meaning fathoms the depths, and compasses the horizon of life.

For a man of but half his years I well knew

him, whom I shall here call Theophilus*. The recollection of him is to me one of the most perfectly soothing and strengthening that life has afforded. When I first met him, some ten years before his departure, he was past his prime; but at the last he was only on the verge of old age, which never indeed seemed to have any place in his heart or his intelligence. As first seen,—and in these respects unchanged, until that hour which changed him altogether,—he was tall, slender, and graceful, with a head which in form and character had a beauty at once magnanimous and delicate. The high heroic features and irresistible sweetness of look recalled Fenelon, but in a grander type, and Baxter polished into a purer stamp of gentlemanly softness. The marble clearness of the complexion, the lustre of the full grey eye, the high compact forehead, with its silvered hairs; but it is vain thus to enumerate particulars, which, taken separately, do so little towards a portrait. Even the invisible characteristics, which words can better deal with, cannot thus be represented to others. For it avails scarce at all to speak of eloquence, learning, devotion, benignity, the fervid chastened glow of soul. All these are to a reader, not perhaps nothing, but very little of what they appeared as living in him. For

* The Reverend John Dunn.

that which gave its broadest worth and tenderest attractiveness to all, was a something peculiar and native in him alone, which I do not know how to indicate better than by the faint phrase, —refinement of heart. It was not composed finish of manner, not philosophical subtlety of thought, but exquisiteness of beauty in the whole structure of his feelings and life, that gave to his demeanour and discourse an expression, which no polish, no genius, could either have imparted or compensated.

There was in him a faint flush of Irish nature, a strong tone of an older and more elaborate school of courtesy, than prevails now, the simplicity of a recluse student, the singularity of a mystical idealist, the freshness of a lover of all beauty and wisdom, whom no excess in intellectual indulgence had ever wearied of thought. But all these may be found, though not in common men, yet in those far colder and far coarser than him. Add that there was the vivid life of human sympathies, which duty always guided, and selfishness never confined. Yet even this is not the man. His distinct personality seemed rather to consist in the unceasing continuity of generous and upward feeling, to which the graceful, the becoming, the right was not added as a qualification or measure, but belonged to it, inhered in it, as its vital spirit.

His conversation was suitable to these charac-

teristics,—flowing in a full stream of emotion and mild wisdom and lambent faith, with a reserve and deference towards those opinions of others on which they set any value, such as could hardly have been surpassed had his associates been a circle of sovereigns, and he their only courtier. Thus the mellow cordiality of his soul seemed to reconcile to him even those, whose harsh intellectual bigotry armed itself the most surely against all theoretical dissent from them. It was curious to see how those who talked of *the truth*, as if theirs were the whole, instead of some withered grain or mangled fragment of it, were subdued by a spirit to which the free love of truth was as the feeding air,—how they felt that in those which they could least understand or most hated of his doctrines, there dwelt, as they appeared in him, a power of moral beauty which they could not resist. None can have known him without discerning that he, of all men, called up flowers where he found none, and scattered honey even over the nettles from which he could not extract it.

His rebukes, which were extremely rare, took the form of an assertion of some high truth, not of the exposure of the opposite error; and when nothing benignant, nothing elevating could be said, a painful blushing silence showed that he felt the levity or perverseness of another, as a cause of shame for human nature, and almost

therefore for himself, not of triumphant condemnation.

The eloquence for which he was noted, poured, when occasion called for it, in a large golden stream of fancy and sympathy, with abundant and clear ratiocinative illustration, but with no severely rigid sequence of argument. Nor was it wont to have any of that inward labouring pause of wonder, which, in the austerer and the more peculiarly speculative, sometimes bespeaks the presence of a single profound and absorbing idea. To recommend and enjoy truth was his calling;—to swing her burning censers, glisten in her white robes, and be brightened by her meekest glory, rather than to darken and be amazed, and rise a stern prophet, when her strong whisper thunders in the quaking heart. But if to others be allotted monuments of granite and brass, no purer loftier image of ivory and alabaster stands in the lunar shrine of memory.

The philosophy of this good and wise man was in beautiful accordance with his structure of mind, and all his life. The greater portion of his thoughts and studies had been occupied in the construction of a scheme of the universe, buttressed by countless authorities of Pagan sages and Christian fathers, though, as a whole, exactly harmonizing with the views of none of these. This laborious and graceful structure,—an airy minaret of celestial meditation,—I do not know

with sufficient accuracy and minuteness to give an account of it. But it is plain that, if it erred, it was not by any undue favour for the mechanical propensities of modern times, and for that ethical indifference which deals with spiritual truth as coldly as with any physical problem. On the contrary, it was his whole aim to refer all causation to essential good,—and, rising into communion with it, to escape from the slough of matter and mechanism. That he had ever fully seen the extreme difficulty of those highest questions, which modern speculative science proposes to itself, it would be presumption either to assert or to deny. It is however pardonable to suspect that the truth, which he had trained his heart to serve so willingly, may have appeared to him intellectually nearer and plainer, than in its full expanse and natural height it actually is. It seemed essential to much of what was best and deepest in him, that he should never have nerved himself to fathom the black depth of evil in man, and that he thus presented good as a remedy for all wrong, with the blind reliance of youthful innocence. So too perhaps he may have failed to survey the widest gulfs of distance, which thought has now traversed; and therefore he may have taken a starting point and solution, lofty and comprehensive enough for the noblest practical being, but not quite satisfying all the demands, which the severest intelligence in our day makes upon systems

of philosophy. Whether this be so, I cannot tell. It is at least certain, that he delighted to expound his thoughts in the language of other times, and used the terms now of Aristotle,—now of Origen, —now of Fenelon, while subordinating all he believed to the lore of Revelation in Paul and John.

His labours were probably incomplete, and at all events will never appear in the shape which he once hoped to give them. But the great work of his life was his life itself, which, if it compels us to mourn for what we have lost, assuredly leaves us nothing to lament for him.

TALES AND APOLOGUES.

THE SHELL:

A HISTORICAL APOLOGUE.

(*Reprinted from the Athenæum for* 1828.)

THE world was made for man, said he.

I will tell you an apologue, answered the teacher.

1. In a beautiful bay of the celebrated island Atlantis, a large Shell of the most delicate white and the most rounded form, the relic from some previous world, lay on the smooth and elastic sand. It was left for a long period undisturbed and unaltered, sometimes kissed by the extreme bubbles of the billows, and often trembling so melodiously in the wind, as to have furnished to the early gods the first hint of a musical instrument, and to have been the prototype of the sounding conchs which accompanied with their deep notes the feasts on Olympus, and the Indian triumphs of Bacchus.

2. The moist dust gradually accumulated within it; and the germ of a sea-weed fell upon the soil, and grew until a fair and flourishing plant, with long dark leaves, overhung the white edge of the thin and moonlike vase. For many months the ocean-herb retained its quiet existence, imbibed the night-dew of the heavens,

rejoiced in the fresh breezes from the sea, and lived in tranquil safety through every change of shower and sunshine. At length a storm arose, which rolled the waters upon the shore. The Shell was overwhelmed, the plant washed out of it, and the light vessel swept into a cleft of the rocks.

3. After some days of calm and warmth, a bird dropped a seed into it, which sprouted and became an orange-tree. Its leaves were so thick and green, that they would have supplied a graceful chaplet to a wood-nymph; and she might have delighted to place in her bosom the pearly and fragrant blossoms which hung amid the tuft of verdure. The seasons with their varieties, and the starry influences of gentle nights nurtured the shrub; and the pure flowers were changed into gorgeous fruits, which gleamed through the foliage like the glimpses of a gilded statue in some deserted temple through the robes and coronals of creepers which have overgrown it. The orange-tree had gladdened many spring-times with its sweetness and its splendour, when it faded and died; and the birds of the air piped a lamentation over the shrub, amid the living beauty of which they had so often nestled.

4. In after years, when nothing remained of the orange but a slight and dreamy odour around the Shell, and the last light grains of the dust wherein it grew had been borne away by the eddying

breezes, a butterfly, as red and glittering as the planet Mars, came on its crimson wings to the dim and spiral cell. It fluttered round the ivory entrance, poised itself upon it for a moment, and waved its silken sails. Then, after darting and circling, like a winged mote of the sunbeam, through the deep woods and over the sea, it returned to perish. While it sank into its quiet and beautiful retreat, it yet seemed loth to leave a world which to it had been a fairy domain: but the necessity of its nature was upon it; and it closed the gay leaflets which had sustained its flight, and resigned itself to death.

5. It was followed by a troop of bees, which took possession of the Shell, and, after their daily excursions over meadow and bloomy bank, returned to its smooth and undulated chambers with the materials of their combs, and with large store of bright and luscious honey. The tiny echoes of their abode resounded with the constant hum of labour and happiness; and it was soon as brimming as a wine-cup at a nuptial-feast, with the rich and perfumed treasures of the insects, arranged and sealed in the exact compartments which filled the interior of their silvery palace. But a bird attacked and destroyed their commonwealth; and again the Shell was left empty.

6. A humming-bird, all emerald, ruby, and sapphire, then discovered the lonely nook, and

folded its jewelled wings there. It soon found a mate; and together they lived a flowery life. He who had seen either of them wandering at sunset through the glen, would have believed that the brilliant core of the western sky was fluttering away along the earth; or the little animal might have been thought the choicest signet of a prince, transformed of a sudden into a living thing, and endued with the power of flight. When they wheeled together towards their home at twilight, no pair of fire-flies, no twin lights of the firmament could be brighter than their diamond crests. The sweet essences of a thousand buds and flowers supplied their nourishment; and, while they sucked the delicious juices of ripe fruits, their wings were tinctured by the lightest bloom of the plum and the grape. But the rain dropped thick and fast into the Shell; and the gentle birds, which seemed made to whisper love-messages in the rosebud ear of a lady, and to hide themselves in sport among her ringlets, departed from their nest, and sought, in sparry grotto, or in southern bower, a more secure habitation for their lovely, but frail existence.

7. Lastly, at sun-rise, seemed flitting from the morning-star an elfin spirit, which danced into the Shell, and assumed it as his home. It thrilled with life and pulsation; and while a spring gushed out of the rock, and bore it along towards

the sea, he spread his thin wings to the breeze, and sailed in his lily-coloured argosy away over the blue and sunny deep. The white Shell, and its new sovereign, moved forward with the graceful swiftness of a snowy swan, tilting over the light ripples of the water, and, when night came with its constellations, seemed to be itself a trembling star on the verge of the horizon. That spirit too shall inhabit the Shell but for a time, and shall then depart, that he may develop, in some more fitting position, the whole capacities of his nature. The Shell will sink into the waves, and be joined to the treasures of the ocean caverns, in them also to aid the existence of other beings, and to fulfil a new cycle of its ministry.

That Shell is the WORLD; that Spirit MAN. Yet not for man alone was it created, but for all the living things in the successive stages of existence, which can find in it a means of happiness, and an instrument of the laws which govern their being.

THE CATERPILLAR:

AN UNPUBLISHED EPISODE FROM THE ROYAL HISTORIES OF ABU TALEB.

(*Reprinted from the Athenæum for* 1828.)

THE Caliph's tree, in the Royal Gardens at Bagdad, is it not as celebrated as the well Zemzem, the waters of which give beauty to women, and eloquence to the lips of the poet? Every one who has heard of Bagdad, knows that the stem is of pure gold, with branches of silver, and that each leaf is a separate jewel. The music which gushes amid its boughs by night and day, has reached to the corners of the earth; and its shadow is more delightful than the greenest bower in the four gardens of Asia. The Peris have often been seen to light upon it at sunset; and the gleam of their flower-like wings has mingled with the waving splendour of the tree, while the plaintive murmur of their voices sounded amid the breezy chimes of the rich and star-studded foliage, and the pipings of the opal-coloured or purple birds which nestled or fluttered in the leaves.

In the fifth year of the Caliph Mohadi, after the second hour of prayer, Zobeide, the most beautiful among the daughters of the Commander

of the Faithful, was seated beneath its rainbow-tinted shade. This was but her fourteenth summer; yet a thousand poets had proclaimed her the noblest pearl in the diadem of Islam, and the brightest lamp of Paradise. While the light breezes floated past her, and flung their tributes of spicy scent among the long ringlets on her bosom, she sat upon a silken cushion, and twisted flowers into a garland for the neck of her favourite antelope.

But suddenly a large green and crimson caterpillar crept from a rosebud to the hand that held it. Zobeide started at feeling it on her finger, and flung it off hastily at the foot of the golden tree, where it lay for an instant bruised and motionless. A moment after, it swelled and rose, till it had expanded into the form of a venerable man, clothed in white robes, and leaning on a long ebony staff. He fixed his eyes upon Zobeide, and said, I am Buzurg Mihir, who alone of men was a true believer before the coming of the Prophet. Thou hast been permitted to read the sublime volume: wherefore hast thou not better learned its precepts, than to dash from thy hands an unoffending insect? God has given thee power to injure his creatures; but by the mouth of the Prophet he has commanded thee to protect them. Thou shalt speedily know thy punishment. At these words he frowned so fiercely, that Zobeide

shuddered, and dropped her white eyelids with their dark fringes over her glancing eyes.

When she looked up, he was gone; but at the same time she saw a dark cloud advancing over the garden. An army of locusts was approaching, which filled the air around her, and hid the light with their innumerable legions. The ground under her feet became animated with frogs and lizards; and shining serpents crawled and hissed among the flowers of the garden. In an agony of alarm Zobeide shrieked and ran to the entrance; but, instead of the tall black slave who usually guarded it with his scymetar, an immense crocodile opened his long jaws, armed with tremendous teeth to oppose her passage, and beat the earth with his rattling tail, while the Princess felt as if every stroke was to crush her.

She rushed to another gate, and was stopped by an enormous web of thick black rope, which a spider, of the size of a camel, was engaged in completing. When she approached the reptile,—for despair had made her courageous,—he desisted from his labour, stretched out six long arms, which terminated in crooked claws, grinned horribly in her face, and seemed prepared to drag her into the meshes of his den. She fled from this second opponent; but wherever she turned, some huge monster encountered her. The locusts

filled and darkened the air; their noise perpetually sounded in her ears; and they had settled on every leaf in the garden. She tried every path to find some means of escape, but failed in them all; and at the last entrance a gigantic centipede reared himself on his tail, and with his horrid head overtopped the tallest palm-trees round him.

She started from the new enemy, and fell in a swoon upon the sod. When she recovered, Buzurg Mihir was before her. Zobeide, he said, thou art punished sufficiently. Remember in future to pity the meanest of the creatures of God.

The white robe fell from his figure; he dropped the staff; and the ancient sage was suddenly transformed into the noblest youth among the sons of Islam. The princess was enchanted by his green turban and purple slippers, his black mustachios, and sparkling eyes lighted with admiration; and the grace with which he hung around her neck a string of the largest pearls of Bahrein, made Hatem completely triumphant. In three days Zobeide was on her way to Syria with the Emir of Damascus, whom Arabia and Persia had unanimously declared to be brave as Rustam, generous as Arabah, and handsomer than Ferhad, the lover of Shirin. Zobeide never again hurt a caterpillar; for, fondly as she loved Hatem,

she always abhorred the recollection of Buzurg Mihir.

Moral.

So far the veracious Abu Taleb; and hence young ladies may learn that the way to obtain handsome husbands is to kill caterpillars.

THE LAST OF THE GIANTS.

(*Reprinted from the Athenæum for* 1828.)

Ενθα δ' ἀνηρ ἐνίαυε πελώριος . . . .
. . . . . οὐδὲ μετ' ἄλλους
Πωλείτο.

Odyssey, b. ix.

ABOUT the middle of the fifteenth century of our era, a brigantine, which had sailed from the Tagus, was wrecked on that north-western corner of the great continent of Africa, where the ancients placed Mount Atlas. The whole crew were lost on that inhospitable beach, with the exception of a single person. Roderick was a strong and daring man, of middle age, who in his wandering life had seen many changes. He had fought and acquired distinction in Italy, and had studied in Spain with such success, as to become master of several of the most ancient languages of the East, besides the fashionable sciences of logic, metaphysics, astronomy, medicine, and theology. His character was a singular mixture of the soldier and the philosopher. Amid the destruction of his comrades, he saved little more than his life, his sword, and a bag of hard biscuit, which had suffered considerably from the salt-water. Supported however by this bitter and scanty fare, he journeyed for some days towards the interior of the country.

He travelled at night, to avoid the heat of the sun, and sought for rest and concealment by day; and he was compelled to eke out his sustenance by wild fruits. In this manner he made good his progress for thirty days; at the end of which time he found himself at the foot of a steeper, more rugged, and loftier mountain than any he had previously passed over. The full moon enabled him to examine the barrier which opposed him; and after some scrutiny he discovered a ravine, which led up the side of the vast eminence, and appeared to be the bed of a winter torrent. It was now dry; and he determined to pursue the course it marked out for him. After struggling upwards the whole night among rocks and sand, he found himself at daybreak still far from the summit; and discovering a small clump of trees, which shaded the side of the gorge, at no great distance, he resolved to repose there for the day. Some drops of water fortunately trickled through the rocks, among their roots; and when he had availed himself of this resource to quench his thirst, he stretched himself in the cool and dim retreat, and speedily sank to sleep. His slumber lasted for the greater part of the day. When he awoke, the sun had so far declined, that its disk seemed resting on the summit of the pass. He left the shade of the trees, beneath which he had spent the day, and gained the middle of the ravine. A considerable ledge of stone rose in his

front, over which he climbed; and just when he had lifted his head above its edge, a noise like a sudden peal of thunder seemed to break from the height above. He raised his eyes in that direction, and saw rushing towards him a huge mass of rock, broken from the mountain, and rolling down with the speed of a torrent. It came on crushing the few trees that grew in its path, and shattering the crags on which it struck. Roderick crouched below the ledge he had been mounting; and the enormous block bounded over his head, and crashed downwards towards the plain. He immediately regained his former position; and his first impulse was to look up, for the purpose of discovering the cause which had loosened the crag, and placed him in so tremendous a peril. His eyes were directed to the break of the mountain, towards which he had been toiling; and he saw, standing against the sky, and showing dark between him and the sun, a being of such monstrous size, as no pageant had ever exhibited, no tale ever told of. The rocky soil was still crumbling under his foot; and some detached fragments, though smaller than the former, were bursting at intervals down the ravine. He leaned upon a cedar, which seemed recently up-rooted; and the hands clasped upon its top looked each of them larger than the largest shield employed in the wars of Europe. His head was bent down towards the plain; and, amid its grim and shaggy

swarthiness, Roderick thought he could perceive a look of melancholy. Except that a diadem of gold encircled his grey hairs, his body was entirely destitute of ornament; and a girdle of lion-skins covering his loins was his only vesture. He stood thus mournfully surveying the wilderness for many minutes, and seemed a mighty colossus of granite fixed for ever upon the mountain. His shadow darkened the pass; and Roderick could perceive that it stretched for leagues over the desert. At last he turned himself slowly; and the light streamed in upon the darkness which he had made. He stretched his arm; and again the soldier felt the cold shadow on his brow. The object of his consternation gained with a few strides the very crest of the eminence, through a hollow of which the traveller had been labouring. The Giant sat down upon the summit, seemingly without perceiving that he had crushed a thicket beneath him. He leaned his head upon his arm, and let the cedar fall from his hand, as if it had been a wand. It dropped not far from Roderick; and he thought that no trunk of such prodigious measure had ever been nourished in the forests of Spain or Germany. But he withdrew his eyes to look at the monster, and saw that he seemed to have composed himself to meditation. His limbs lay along the ridge of the mountain; he appeared to take in at a gaze the whole continent beneath him; and the outline of the giant, touched by the

last splendour of the setting sun, showed in all the immensity of its proportions, with a distinctness which would have been beautiful, had it not been terrible.

But darkness came; and the being on whom Roderick looked, was no longer anything more than a shadow among shades, a mass, like a thunder-cloud, of threatening obscurity. The traveller remained motionless and silent. At last the giant lifted himself against the firmament, and disappeared behind the ridge of the mountain. Roderick pursued his way in much of fear, and something of perplexity; though he was less astonished at what he had seen, than the modern philosophers would have been, whom presumption has made sceptical. He proceeded up the pass, and after the labour of several hours approached its highest elevation. But long before he reached the top, he heard with surprise and alarm a succession of crashing noises, like the sound of a vessel's masts and timbers breaking in the tempest. He arrived at the highest part of the gulley; and the mountains, on one of which he had before seen the Giant recline, rose high on each hand. The stars were out above the crags; and a bright moon clearly showed the whole wonderful prospect which lay before him. He had now gained access to a large and wooded valley, a basin among the hills, a part of which was occupied by a lake entering it at one side, and stretching away beyond

his view. Into this receptacle ran a broad stream, which flowed from some unseen recess, and, directly beneath the position of the wanderer, fell in a considerable cataract, to gain the level of the lake. Fronting him at a distance, half-way up the opposite ascent, a red and smoky fire was blazing under the shadow of a cavern; and when he looked still higher towards the summit of the eminence, the great and fearful being he had already seen was moving with part of his figure clearly defined against the deep blue sky, as enormous as the phantom-seeming clouds of the crater of a volcano, but distinct as a statue of iron. Not statue-like however did he now stand; for he was engaged in a labour worthy even of his strength. On the very crest of the mountain a pile of wood was reared, larger than the largest of the Egyptian Pyramids; and to this the Giant was adding new loads of timber. He stepped with a few strides to the neighbouring hills, and encircling in his arms at once a score of the tallest trees, evidently the produce of many centuries, plucked them from the earth by the roots. The sound of their overthrow was that which had scared Roderick. The Titan snapped off their heads with all the foliage, as a child would break a lily, and returned deliberately with the trunks, to place them upon the already immeasurable heap. Thus he did repeatedly, till he had accumulated, from many leagues of forest, a structure of such magnitude, that it might have

furnished materials for all the navies in the world, and would have out-topped the tower of Babylon, and covered a wider space than the palace of Nero. Roderick gazed upon the Giant and his labour with breathless awe. As he moved round the pile, his portentous frame was perpetually displayed in some new attitude, that called forth new astonishment, by exhibiting afresh the miracles of his size and power. Sometimes, when the pile appeared to incline too much on one side or the other, he applied both his hands to push it in the required direction; and, the moon pouring its full stream of light on his broad expanse of back, it seemed a steep ascent, rough with hair, and broken into a thousand varieties of surface by ridges of sinews and crags of bone, but wide enough for the charge of a hundred chariots; and the legs, which were then extended and active, showed like leaning towers with pillar-work of muscles. Or, in adding to the height of the fabric, he would lift his arm to its full length between the view of Roderick and the sky, holding some immense trunk with its recent roots gleaming white in the moonshine. On such occasions it seemed that he could have swept the stars from their courses, and dashed away the empyrean, as a robber tears off the veil of his captive. The golden circlet which he still wore, glittered on his forehead far up amid the sky, like one of the heavenly orbs; and he looked as if he had indeed a

right to add his diadem to the number of the planets, and reign himself the Lord of the Universe.

The stranger had no conception for what purpose such a being could have erected such a pile. But for the time his attention was called away. The Giant descended the mountain, till he reached the cave in which the fire was still burning. He stooped to enter its recesses, though a galley in full sail might have passed beneath the arch without vailing its pennon, and returned, bearing in his right-hand a golden cup, of the size and shape of one of the domes of St. Sophia, and in his left a blazing tree. Carrying these, he bestrode the vallies as a ploughman steps across the furrows, till he arrived at the river. He dipped his bowl into the flood above the cataract; and for a moment the water-course was dry, and the noise of the falling torrent hushed. He stood up; he looked around him, and drank. Again the water had begun to flow, and the cataract roared between his feet; again he stooped; and again he had scooped the whole current into his vase; and the sound of the stream dashing over the rocks was not heard for some seconds. This time he did not empty the cup; but he bore it and the still burning trunk to his pile upon the mountain. He stood beside it, and flung over it some of the water; and, while he lifted the flaming brand, he looked towards the stars, and spoke aloud. Ro-

derick started, when he heard his voice, not merely on account of the thrilling depth of tone, but because the language was one of those ancient tongues, with which the traveller had become familiar in his youth, having learned them from an aged Moor accomplished in all the knowledge of the East. As nearly as he could discover, the purport of that which the Giant uttered was as follows.

To you, O stars, with whom, and with whose inhabitants, I claim a kindred that belongs not to the insect-men of this lower earth,—to you I address myself; and in your honour I pour this water over the pile, whereon I am about to die. The child of a mighty line, the one surviver of a myriad kings, looks for the last time on your bright fronts, ye eternal orbs, and tells you that the sole remaining monarch of all the race, your offspring and your worshipers, is soon to seek the throne which awaits him amid your constellations. I have seen the sons of the giants fade away, as the forest which even now has fallen beneath my hand; and the world is given to a meaner kind, as that forest will be succeeded by a crop of weeds. Before this globe was divided into land and sea, before the parents of its present puny tribes had been formed out of its dust, it was the inheritance and the kingdom of my fathers. Ours were the structures, among the foundations of which men wander, and marvel at their height; ours the

castle which scaled the skies; ours the mountains heaped on mountains, whereby we threatened to interrupt the revolutions of the sun. My sires wooed the spirits from other spheres, to become their brides and the mothers of their children; and the fire of angelic natures is in my veins. But that fire is now cold and dim; and I go to find, at your unfailing altars, the flame which may reanimate my soul. For five thousand years I have been alone on earth; and from the day when my hands reared Caucasus with all its peaks over the ashes of my father, I have seen none whose presence has not been a curse to me,—to whom I have not been a curse and a perdition. I have lived to keep burning among these mountains the holy flame which is grateful to you. But the destiny which has been over all my brethren, is over me; and my hour is come. The brightness of your power has been upon me in the nights of many ages. I can no longer resist the doom. I go to join you; I yield up this weary body to the elements from which it was composed. But while my dust shall be added to the clay of this globe, which is no longer the heritage of more powerful beings than man,—while the atoms of my body are resolved into that which may one day be trampled by the feet, and divided by the ploughshares, of the most wretched among mortals,—there is that within the fleshly frame, which shall become a sharer in your glory, and a portion of it.

Look, you eternal orbs! and thou, moon! that even now art sinking from the heavens, look with your most splendid and benignant radiance on the death-fire of the Last of the Giants!

He applied his torch to the corners of the pile, and stood beside it with motionless serenity, looking stedfastly at the heavens, till the lapse of a considerable time had enabled the flames to deepen and to spread. They extended swiftly, with a thick smoke and a tremendous noise, till they had embraced the whole circuit of the pile, which then had more resemblance to a stormy and lurid sunset, than to any other spectacle known among men. The fire rushed furiously upward, and illuminated the form and face of the Titan with a light more unearthly and terrific than any in which the wanderer had seen him; and his broad eye fixed upon the moon gleamed like the corslet of a warrior on the wall of a burning city. But he did not long remain thus; for so soon as the whole mass of timber appeared to have caught the flame, he calmly stepped into the midst of the conflagration, and laid himself upon his scorching bed. The fire rose rapidly and far, till it widened and towered into a pyramid of light; and the grey smoke which burst around, darkened half the heavens. The wind increased; and the crackling of the wood, and roar of the burning became appalling. Clouds began to sail in over the opposite mountains; and, but for the

glare of the pyre, the whole horizon would have been black. The blaze spread to the relics of the forest, and caught the brushwood which still covered a large portion of the hills. The prospect became one vast amphitheatre of fire; and the smoke and flame broke fiercely upward, and formed a sky of mingled light and darkness, sublimity and horror. Still the great master conflagration rose far beyond every other part of the burning circle, and seemed a furnace fuelled with the earth to consume the heavens. The eagles rose screaming from their nests upon the rocky peaks, and wheeled amid the smoke and flakes of fire, till even their wings were insufficient to bear them from the danger; and they dropped stifled into the red abyss. Roderick was compelled by the heat and smoke to flee from the danger. For several hours he travelled with the utmost speed away from the spot of so astounding a catastrophe, and at last lay down completely exhausted in a grotto among the rocks at the foot of the mountain. At the end of three days the clouds which had been gathering in the heavens, poured out their burthens. For a week the rain fell in a continued flood; and if the traveller had not been possessed of a small store of berries and nuts, he must have died of starvation. After that time the deluge ceased; and he returned upon his former steps to examine the Giant's valley; but the torrents had so roughened the ravine, that his journey was one of difficulty and

pain. At length however he gained his goal, and found that the space encircled by the mountains was half filled with water, which had risen above the mouth of the cave. In this Roderick had expected to find some tokens and memorials of the Giant's existence; but it was now accessible only to the fishes and the water-snakes. He climbed to the bare summit of the mountain on which the pile had been raised, and found that the floods had washed away every vestige of the sacrifice he had witnessed. But on scrutinizing the surrounding rocks, which were all discoloured by the heat, he found in a crevice the well-remembered golden crown. It was adorned with graven devices of stars and wings, and framed of the purest metal. After months of toil and hardship, Roderick escaped to Europe; and a fragment of the diadem, which was all he had been enabled to save, sufficed in his native country to purchase broad lands, stately castles, and ancient lordships. But what was the grandeur of ordinary men to eyes that had beheld the mighty presence of the Last of the Giants?

ZAMOR.

(*From the Athenæum for* 1828.)

I.

THE air was basking in the noontide among the hills that are traversed by the rapid Erigon. The woody sides of the vallies which opened upon the river, lay slumbering in breezy dimness; but the sky was blue and bright around the breasts and peaks of the mountains, except where broad white clouds, floating high and swift between them and the sun, varied the landscape by occasional sweeps of shadow. The sparkling and winding water flowed silently along the green bases of the eminences; and its surface was marked by nothing but the differences of colour occasioned by the wind and stream, and by the fresh-looking islets of water-plants, or the trunk of a tree rolling down the current, and showing its brown branches or the white rent of its stem among the shining ripples. Down one of the glens which descend towards the stream, a boy of thirteen or fourteen years of age was slowly wandering. He was tall and of a noble presence. His open, upturned brow was surrounded with careless ringlets of light brown hair, and was shaded by a low cap or bonnet, in which he wore an eagle's feather.

His dark-coloured kirtle descended to his knee, over trowsers which left the leg exposed above the sandal. A belt of wolf-skin sustained a short sword, and confined his dress round the waist; and with his left hand he led a large and powerful dog by a twisted chain of gold; while in his right he carried a strong hunting spear, the point of which gleamed like a star above his head. His features were of a regular and spirited beauty; and his quick eye perpetually glanced from the path he was pursuing to the mountains round him and the skies beyond. He proceeded in his devious and negligent course, now sinking into thought, now rushing and leaping over rocks and bushes, while the dog sprang up and barked and sported round him, till he reached an irregular and broken wood, which spread, with many intervals, along the green banks of the river.

The boy threw himself under the shade of an oak, where he had a glimpse of the cool water among the stems of the trees; and his canine friend couched quietly by his side, now looking up into his face, now rubbing his legs with its nose, and wagging its bushy tail, now closing its eyes, and sinking with a sigh into a tranquil doze. The youth too was so still, that he might have been thought to slumber, had not his restless glances indicated the stir within. It was indeed a mind not formed for inactivity; but its present thoughts were rather the overflowing and sport

of its vigour, than the application of it to any definite end. He remembered the oracles which had spoken among the ancient oaks of Epirus, till he almost heard the promise of his own greatness sounding from the trees, while they trembled and rustled around and above him. Then came imaginations of the Dryads, the forest spirits, so beautiful and so capricious, who were accustomed to fly from men, and dedicate their loveliness to the greenwood shade. As the breeze moved the shadow of some branch, he started to think that he saw the waving of the airy locks; and for a moment he beheld the twinkle of the light footsteps, in the casual breach of a sunbeam through the foliage on the dark ground of the vistas before him. These visions passed away; and in their place seemed sweeping through the distant obscurity of the thicket the pomp and triumph of Bacchus,—the youths with arms and wine-cups, and baskets of gorgeous fruits unknown to Europe, the dark eyes and glowing limbs of damsels, whose wreaths of Oriental flowers shook fragrance through the air, while swiftly and gracefully they flung aloft and struck together their ringing cymbals, ancient Pan with a world of merriment in his pipe, and, amid a tumult of green coronals and wild exultations, the young conqueror himself, drawn forward by his lions, with the pride of a hundred victories on his brow, and the joyousness of a hundred vintages on his lips, and a spear

so often washed in wine, and so clustered with grapes and ivy-berries, half-hid among their foliage, that not a trace of its myriad death-stains was visible. They gleamed for a moment from the recesses of the green maze on the eye of the dreaming boy; and why should not he too be the conqueror of Asia, and his banners return over the Hellespont laden and glittering with the spoils of the Euphrates and the Indus?

He rose while he thought of it, so hastily that his dog gave a slight cry at feeling the pull which his collar received from the arm of his master, who stept forward eagerly for an instant, while his right hand grasped the spear with an energy indicating how bold would be the spirit and how wide the fame of Alexander, the son of Philip.

He walked forward for a few minutes with boyish impetuosity, when his attention was diverted by seeing a large blue butterfly, which flew across his path. He freed the chain which held Lacon from the collar, and pursued the insect; while the dog, in imitation of his master, rushed barking and eager in pursuit of the same wandering object. It led him among the hills which he had before left, never coming within his reach, but never mounting so far away as to make him relinquish the pursuit. It flew at last over the edge of a precipice into a broken and narrow dell; but the fearless and active boy dropped from the verge, and, after scrambling

for a minute or two among the rocks and bushes, reached the end of the descent. It was a wild and lonely hollow, on the steep banks and narrow area of which the pine and the cypress rose above the thick under-growth of weeds, shrubs, and flowers. The insect still hovered before its pursuer; and, after a few steps, he found that he had followed it into an ancient cemetery. The tombs seemed to have been mouldering in neglect for centuries; and merely a few irregular mounds and broken fragments of walls remained. Beyond one of these relics of building, now covered with different vigorous creepers, the bright blue wings disappeared. He went to the spot, and found that, beyond the dilapidated wall, the sun streamed in upon a little patch of grass. Here the insect had poised itself upon a human skull, half covered with moss, and crowned by a natural wreath of trailing honey-suckle. Thus the beautiful and airy creature he had been chasing was perched, with its azure fans expanded and glittering in the sunshine. It seemed the immortal Psyche, the spiritual life waiting to take wing from amid the dust and decay of mortality. The boy leaped over the obstruction, and stooped to seize it; but it vibrated for an instant the splendid pennons which served it for sails, and rose swiftly and far above the head of the disappointed pursuer.

He looked after it for a few seconds; and Lacon bayed fiercely at the soaring insect. But

his owner stooped again to the relic; for, when he had previously bent towards the butterfly, he had seen what appeared to be metal shining on the turf. It was a large gold coin, which lay between the teeth of the skull. The device of an eye within a circle was distinctly visible on one side; and on the other was traced, in the oldest character Alexander had ever seen, the word ZAMOR.

He restored the coin to its place; but such was his recollection of the occurrence, that the signet, wherewith in after years he sealed Hephæstion's lips, bore the device of a butterfly poised upon a skull, with the motto ZAMOR.

II.

THE youth was a youth no more. He was in all the vigour and beauty of manhood, a sovereign and a conqueror, and roamed no longer in the woods of Macedonia, but in the deep gloom of an Indian forest. He had outstripped his train in the eagerness of the chace; and when the thick jungle prevented him from continuing his course on horseback, he leaped from the saddle and pierced his way on foot. His mantle was now of regal splendour; and his light helmet was encircled with a slender diadem of gold. The garment which fell from under his inlaid cuirass to his knee, was interwoven with silver thread; and his sandals were studded with jewels. His lips had gained the firm expression of will and power; and thought had left its stamp upon his forehead.

He penetrated speedily through the thicket which had interrupted him, and found himself in a little glade surrounded by spreading trees. He stood still, and gazed for a moment; and it seemed to him that he heard the half-stifled sobs of sorrow not far off. He moved in the direction of the sound, and, after pushing through a screen of bushes, found himself near an old man, who was kneeling on the ground, close to the trunk of a great tree; and, while his clasped hands trem-

bled on his shuddering breast, the tears fell thickly from his eyes. He wore the dress of a Brahmin. Beside him lay the corpse of a girl, apparently twelve or thirteen years of age. Though her skin was rather more dusky than that of Europeans, she was very beautiful in the eyes of the king. Her round and shining limbs were of the most exquisite delicacy; the long black hair, wreathed with white flowers, fell loose over her maiden bosom, which had ceased to heave with the breath of life. An arrow had pierced her through the body; and the blood had flowed to the knees of the old man, and stained his garments. He was a father wailing over his murdered child.

Alexander silently approached, and saw that on the left breast of the lovely form, in which the heart no longer stirred, a blue butterfly had placed itself. The agony and tears of the parent did not disturb it. He touched the hair and fingers of the body with a trembling affection, and gazed at it long and passionately; and then again his whole frame was shaken; and he burst into a paroxysm of grief. As the king drew near, the insect rose and soared away to the heavens. Alas! that like it the corpse could not raise itself from the dust it adorned, and move again in all the vivacity and grace of its former existence!

The conqueror spoke in a low, reverential, and

sympathizing voice to the bereaved father. The old man started at the sound, rose to his feet, and shook off the tokens of his agony, as far as nature permitted him. Alexander asked him by what misfortune he had lost his daughter.

The soldiers, replied the Brahmin, of the insane and cruel invader, who has attacked our country, seized my child, and would have detained her, but that she escaped by flight from their hands, when one of them shot an arrow, which slew my beautiful and my beloved.

I swear by the gods, they shall be punished; but do you know, old man, to whom you speak, that you thus venture to calumniate the great Alexander?

If I could not judge by the vulgar signs of those gay and fantastic trappings, I should yet recognize the eyes which so readily glare, the nostril that dilates, the brow that contracts, with passion. These all mark the man who has been accustomed to command others, but not himself.

This is a sight, replied the king, pointing to the dead body, which prompts me to forgive your boldness.

It is a sight, O king, which should rather teach you that I do not need your forgiveness. You have robbed my earthly existence of its charm and glory. I care not how soon it may end.

This is philosophy which would have pleased Callisthenes. What is your name and condition?

I am called Sabas; and, after having travelled over many countries, and learned your language in the Lesser Asia, I have lived, and been happy, —here he faltered, and looked at his child,—at the tomb of the sage ZAMOR.

The warrior started at the name, and asked of Sabas, who was ZAMOR. The Brahmin replied that he had lived many ages before, and had been a mighty conqueror; but that, after overrunning half the earth, he had flung away at once the sceptre and the sword, and betaken himself to a life of meditation and benevolence. The old man went on to say, that the king would learn more from the chief of the Brahmins, who attended the tomb; and to him Sabas brought Alexander.

The ancient teacher, to whom the Grecian commander was thus introduced, trembled in his presence, and, on his demanding to know something more about ZAMOR, replied, that, in addition to what Sabas had told him, the following information was all he could supply: the venerated being in question had employed the later moments of his protracted life in giving directions as to the place and manner in which his ashes were to be disposed of; and, in the volume of pure morality and sublime devotion which he had left, it was declared that the iron doors which bounded his sepulchre would never open, till one who had been as great a conqueror should demand admission. In the course of many ages none such had presented himself.

The pride and curiosity of the sovereign were aroused; and he desired to be led to the tomb. The Brahmin summoned his brethren; and in long files they preceded Alexander to the cavern.

Its rocky circuit was of sufficient extent to include them all: they ranged themselves around the sides; and their leader and the monarch advanced to the tomb, on which several lamps were burning. Here the chief Brahmin offered up his prayers, while the Macedonian went forward to the doors at the farther extremity, and, to the horror of the throng, violently smote the massy metal with the hilt of his sword. The doors crashed open slowly, and displayed a staircase. The king descended fearlessly and alone; and after a long absence returned with a haggard countenance and disordered steps to the cavern, while the doors closed suddenly behind him. He seemed at first confused and bewildered; but, soon recovering himself, he looked round him at the Brahmins, and said, I know not whether you have a share in yonder mummery; but at all events let a wall be built across that entrance, sufficient to prevent any future attempts like mine.

He had paused, and seemed relapsing into deep and doubtful thought, when a loud rush and clang was heard without, mingled with the sound of trumpets. Alexander knew the notes, and, resuming the soldier and the king, gravely

saluted the generals, who had sprung from their horses, and entered the cave to seek him. He moved before them to the mouth of the cavern, and found his usual train of several hundred horsemen, with the chief nobility of Macedonia, Greece, and Persia, awaiting his appearance. Innumerable varieties of dress and arms, of language and feature, were here assembled; and every province he ruled over had sent its noblest and most splendid inhabitants to swell the court of Alexander. All were mounted on the fleetest and most beautiful coursers of Thessaly and Asia; and an unrivalled steed was led by the grooms of the monarch. He mounted it with a careless bound; and while he galloped from the spot, followed by the glittering whirlwind of officers, feudatories, and kings, he talked to those around him of the battle, the chase, the banquet, the philosophy of Aristotle, and the charms of Pancaste.

III.

THE day had died in storm; and the chamber of Alexander was closed and lighted. He lay on his couch in the restlessness and pain of a fever, from which he was never to recover. He was attended only by a young Persian girl, who watched his lightest word and sign with far more than the carefulness of servility. There was all the intensity of passionate affection in that pale cheek, those tearful eyes, and that quivering forehead. She moved silently through the splendid room at the least hint of the patient's want; and, when it was satisfied, she would sit down and weep in silence.

It was early in the evening when he said, Abra, I would speak with Perdiccas. She flew from the chamber, and in a few moments returned with the person named, and then retired to the antechamber; where, among slaves, guards, attendants, and physicians, she hid her face in her hands, and sobbed bitterly, while she thought that the man she loved would so soon breathe his last.

Perdiccas entered the room silently and slowly, and sat beside the bed. After a few moments of heavy breathing, the King turned towards his friend, and told him to move the lamp, so that it might throw no light on the couch. He then proceeded thus:

Perdiccas, you will remember having once found me in India, at the tomb of ZAMOR. I have revealed to no man what I saw there; but I will now disclose it to you. The circumstances which led me thither are of little importance. Suffice it that I presented myself at the iron gates, and that they opened to admit me. I proceeded down a long and dark flight of steps, then through a passage, then down other steps, and had at last advanced to an immense distance through the rock. I thought for a moment of returning; but I went on, and travelled, as it seemed, league after league. At length I reached an iron grating, which with some difficulty I pushed open, and found myself in a large chamber. On the opposite wall there appeared to be a faint glimmer of light; and to it I proceeded. I touched the spot; and it felt like the side of a tent: I found that it was a curtain covering an aperture; I pulled it aside; and a broad pale light burst upon me through the opening, which also gave me a view of another, and far larger chamber than that in which I stood.

The room into which I looked was a vast gallery, which stretched its dreary vista almost beyond the sight. The floor was of black marble, and the sides of polished porpyhry. Along the walls thrones were ranged at equal spaces, to an interminable distance. Those on

one side were all occupied, except the nearest, which bore the name of ZAMOR, but which his late penitence and imperfect reparation had saved the ancient conqueror from occupying. The throne opposite to this,—the first in the vacant line,—was inscribed, ALEXANDER. And O Perdiccas! could I speak with the tongue of one of those Athenian poets, whose renown will be as great as mine, I should yet be unable to express the tithe of that horror which seized me, when I looked upon the tenants of those other thrones, and saw that a similar one was destined for me. It is not that they had an aged or barbaric appearance,—though their hairs were white, and their brows haggard, and their dresses were those of the East and of the North: but their faces were marked with a still desperation, and their bodies settled in a calm agony, of which I had no previous conception. I have often looked upon death: but no pangs from the sword, or from the torture, ever seemed to me more than a slight discomfort, compared to the sufferings of those mighty and glorious warriors. They sat motionless as the rocks on the banks of Phlegethon; but it was the tranquillity of an endurance which feels that it would be hopeless to attempt escape. The eyes of some were nearly closed; and there seemed no light in their countenances, but a dull dead glare which escaped from beneath their shadowing eyelids. There

was one hoary head and swarthy cheek, with a diadem of jewels, and the Egyptian beetle on his breast; and I knew the presence of Sesostris. And there was ancient Belus, with the star of the Babylonian wizards on his brow, leaning his awful head upon his hand. And there was the warrior-deity of those Scythians, whom in my boyhood I subdued, clothed in wolf-skins, but with a cuirass on his breast, and a crown of iron around his scarred forehead. Hercules too, whom we have dreamed a god, leaned upon his club in anguish, which, though silent, was more horrible than the pangs he endured from the robe of Nessus; and a greater than he, or than all the rest, showed the writhen features and sunken cheeks of long-sustained suffering, beneath those emblems of mysterious strength, the moonlike horns of Ammon. There was one spirit, and but one, in whom the fiery energy of his nature was not repressed by the tremendous fate to which he was subjected,—the Greek, who in his youth was victor over Asia, the fleetest, the most beautiful, the bravest, the most unhappy, the demigod Achilles. His eyes still shone like stars, amid the burning halo wherewith his head was of old encircled by Minerva, and which still beamed around him, as if in mockery of those white lips compressed and agitated with a paroxysm of affliction too mighty even for the slayer of Hector to master it. In

the shield which leant against his knees, I saw not the images of the harvest and the dance, but the reflection of the hero's immeasurable pain.

The feet of each of these terrible shadows were placed upon an image of the world; and before my throne I saw a similar attribute. My empire seemed to clasp with its boundary an enormous portion of the earth; but its limits were faint and wavering; and methought at every instant they shrank and broke asunder. Above the thrones were trophies; but, in the midst of each of them, that grey, stern Destiny, who, from its iron cave in some distant planet, sends forth the silent blasts that sway the universe, had fixed some emblem of mockery, shame, and evil. The mowing ape, the crawling worm, the foulness of the harpy, the envenomed slime of the serpent, showed themselves among the spoils, weapons, crowns, and banners of royalty and conquest. And over all this a ghastly light was shed from the eyeless sockets of skeleton warders, who waited upon the enthroned victims.

Can you wonder, my friend, that I felt a horror, which swords and flames and menacing millions could not inspire, when I gazed upon the eternal agonies of those beings so dead to all but misery? My eyes almost failed to see, and my feet to stand, when I turned from them to mark the throne, which bore, so deeply engraven

on its granite pedestal, the name of ALEXANDER. From that hour my nature has changed. I have not had the resolution to yield up my conquests, and disrobe myself of my greatness; but I have sought to lose the memory of my former deeds and future doom in revelries and intoxications, which at last have brought me death, though they have never bestowed forgetfulness. I shall soon be among those dreary and tormented shadows of departed power and dearly bought renown. Take you this ring, (and he gave him the emblematic signet,) and, when you look upon it, remember, that not the image you see upon it, of immortal life and unbroken happiness, will dwell with the remains of kings and conquerors, but the polluting earth-worm and the stinging scorpion.

His voice had grown hoarse and broken; and he proceeded slowly and feebly: though I have failed to profit by the lesson, thus much I have been taught by ZAMOR.

He never spoke again. He left for his generals the slavery of Greece and the distraction of the world; to Perdiccas, a counsel by which he had not profited himself; to Abra, a desolate existence and a broken heart. And so did he perish at Babylon, whose boyhood had sped so blithely among the hills of Macedonia.

THE LYCIAN PAINTER.

(*From the Athenæum for* 1829.)

NICON, king of Lycia, had become celebrated in all Asia Minor for his skill and valour as a military commander, and his wisdom and justice as a ruler; and the waters of the Mediterranean, in which his palace was reflected, were daily traversed by vessels from distant lands, bringing merchants, suppliants, sages, and ambassadors to the throne of the king. He had passed the middle period of life, when his queen died. The corpse was laid on a bier in the hall of the palace; and the subjects of the king assembled to honour the funeral. Flowers were thickly strewn; and loud cries of lamentation burst from the multitude, mingled with the groans of Nicon, and the sobs of his daughter Cleone, and his son Phineus. At the same time, in the pauses of the shrieks and wailings, a low and constant song was heard to be murmured, which sounded like a mixture of threats and prophecies; but no one could catch the import of the words, or knew the language to which they belonged. All were silent, and turned their eyes in the direction of the spot from which the song seemed to proceed. Its tones became wilder and more vehement; and

the crowd shrank from a part of the vast room; and trembling fingers were pointed to a dim recess in the wall. In this the outline of a female figure was faintly visible. It began to move; and the singer came forward with slow steps, which gradually quickened as her song grew swollen and hurried. Her face was almost covered by a thick veil which shaded her brow, and by a mantle raised high above her bosom. But her eyes were seen to glance fiercely round the apartment, and at the king and his children, and sometimes glared with a look of triumph at the unmoving and covered body. Still the Mænad measure and the frenzied chaunt went on. When she came near any of the spectators, they started from her as if she had been a panther from the wilderness, or a gliding serpent. She had nearly gone round the room, when she approached the bier. She took from under her veil a chaplet of dark leaves which she had worn, and was about to fling it among the garlands heaped upon the pall, when Nicon rushed to her and seized her arm. She fixed her eyes on him for an instant, and shook off his grasp; and, while he sank upon a seat, she threw down the gloomy wreath, and for several moments sang at the fiercest pitch of her deep voice. Her long dark hair fell almost to her feet; and she whirled round in a frightful ecstasy, which seemed impelled by a stronger and more

terrible spirit than that of our earthly nature. Thus she rushed through the throng, which scattered like leaves before the north-wind; and in another instant she was gone. Before she disappeared, every garland but her own had withered; and, when they raised the pall, the beautiful corpse had shrunk and faded into a sallow mummy.

Months passed away; and on the bridal day of Cleone, a tall and dark-eyed woman approached the palace, sitting in a sculptured and gilded car, drawn by sable steeds, nobler than any in Lycia. She gave magnificent gifts to the bride; and the king received as a princess the visitor who brought so many evidences of her power and rank. It was observed however that he sometimes trembled under her look; and his attendants whispered, that the proud and fearless Nicon had never before been seen to quail in any human presence, except that of the stranger who had appeared at the funeral of his wife. That evening, in the midst of the rejoicing, Cleone died. The kingdom was filled with lamentations. But ere many weeks it was called on to make merry at the marriage of its sovereign with Mycale. She was of a stately beauty, which few men loved to look upon; and she was conspicuous for the haughtiness of her air, and the boldness with which she guided her black coursers among the mountains, and along the

margin of the sea. A thousand rumours were uttered; and it was said that in a night of tempest she had been seen on the highest tower of the palace, her dark hair streaming round her and the lightning innocently flashing on her brow. Her song, it was reported, had been heard in the pauses of the gale; dark or fiery shapes had echoed it from the clouds; and she had saluted them with uplifted hands. However this may have been, it cannot be questioned that she collected round her a troop of bold retainers, and that their captain, a beautiful barbarian from the mountains, who had been the leader of a predatory band, the terror of Asia, and through her influence had been pardoned by Nicon, was now said to be her paramour.

At a great religious festival, the king, in the presence of all the people, suddenly flung off his diadem, overthrew the altar, and by his gestures and speech was evidently a fierce maniac. Phineus was still a boy; and Mycale obtained the supreme power. She confined her stepson in a small apartment, looking out on an enclosed garden, and never let him be seen by those whom he would be called upon to govern. But the frenzy of Nicon was ostentatiously displayed; and the horror of his subjects was frequently excited by the exhibition of the strangest and most lawless insanity.

Phineus lived a melancholy prisoner. His mind was filled with reflections on his dead mother and his maniac father. But above all he thought of his lovely and beloved sister, who had perished so suddenly and fearfully. As he sat in his solitary chamber, or cultivated the flowers of his narrow garden, and fed himself with the murmur of the sea, which was hidden from his eyes, the constant attendant on his hopeless plans and miserable recollections was the image of Cleone. He brooded over her memory, till at last it became so vivid that he must needs give it an outward expression. He endeavoured to paint a portrait of his sister. Many days were employed in labouring, effacing, and again delineating, while the lines and colours maddened him by their feebleness and insufficiency; and many nights he lay awake, cherishing his recollection of the beautiful maiden, and comparing it in thought with the faint ineffectual form, which alone he had been able to create. The longing to accomplish his purpose became the master passion of his mind. In the shapes of trees and clouds his eyes traced out only the lines which bore some relation to those he wished to express in his picture. The colours of the world, the rays of light had scarcely any interest for him save that which they derived from their resemblance to the hues of his pencil. But still every effort was

baffled; and the thousand imperfect shapes which he successively evoked, seemed all alike to exist for no other end than to mock and torment him. The disgust at the imperfection of each attempt added eagerness to the labour with which he destroyed it, and sought to substitute another. In the course of the many months which were occupied in this work, he was tempted innumerable times to give it up in despair. But the haunting image of Cleone returned to him amid his relaxations and his dreams, with so bright and living an aspect of reality, that he started from his idle mood, or rushed from his couch at midnight, and again with tremulous and burning fingers drew an outline, which his heart told him would prove as inadequate as all its predecessors. He tried to represent the maiden in her bridal dress, with jewels sparkling on her neck, and a garland of white violets around her hair; but the eyes so full of love and gentleness, the flushed cheek, the form bending with emotion, like a lily bowed by the weight of its own beauty,—how weak and rude, compared with his memory of these, was all that he could ever portray!

He commonly laboured in a room, the door of which was left open, and showed the corridor without, and beyond it the tranquil and flowery garden. When his exhausted heart and failing

hand would no longer sustain the labour he imposed upon them, and his eyes were wearied of that chaos of colour from which he had been toiling to educe what for him was a universe,—he looked from the tablet and the walls which he was weary of beholding, to the clear deep air of heaven, and the little realm of silent life, which was filled with his bushes and blossoms, and peopled only by the wren and the butterfly. To this prospect his eyes were turned, after an attempt at painting so unsuccessful that he at last burst into tears. The evening had sailed along the sky, and steeped the earth in silvery twilight; and the stars were glittering brightly above the cypresses, poplars, and holm-oaks, which hid the garden wall. Amid these constellations it appeared to him that a patch of air became suddenly darker and more definite. It moulded itself into shape and colour; and Phineus beheld his sister. The form was indeed Cleone, growing like a fair plant out of the heavens, and surrounded by the radiance of the quiet stars. She seemed to be imbued with their splendour; the last light of sunset was on her cheek; and her aerial locks were still surrounded by the wreath of pearly violets. Her eyes were fixed on him; and gradually she seemed to detach herself from the empyrean, and approach nearer to the earth. She floated in the middle air; and he thought her garments

were faintly stirred by the breeze which he heard cooing among the trees beneath her. When he would have called to her, she seemed to shrink back towards the sky, and to diminish from his view. But when he gazed at her with serene and motionless delight, she grew forth again into definite, though still visionary, beauty, till he almost believed that her feet, white and filmy as wandering gossamer, touched the topmost foliage of the dark trees in his garden.

He looked for many minutes; and he persuaded himself that the eyes of Cleone glanced for an instant from his face to the tablet from which he had just effaced her portrait. He seized his pencil, and renewed his labour, with all the earnestness of the enchanter in framing the talisman, which is to give him immortal youth, wealth without end, and power without limits. Every moment he lifted his eyes to heaven; and still Cleone was before him. His work brightened beneath his hand; and the lamp which burned beside him, seemed to emit a clearer and more genial light than ever before. He had wrought for a considerable time, when the moon rose: as its light pervaded the atmosphere, the figure dissolved into air. That night, the first for many months, Phineus slept calmly and happily; and in the morning he awoke refreshed. His painting appeared to him more faithful, brilliant, and expressive, than he had ever dreamed of making it.

He refrained from using his pencil, for fear a touch might injure the magic woof he had already woven, and in a fearful, passionate hope that the vision might be renewed. All day he passed in his garden: his flowers had never appeared to him so exquisite, nor the sound of the waves so pregnant with music. He looked long at the region of the sky in which his sister had appeared to him; but nothing was visible except the bright blue depths filled with sunshine, traversed by silken fragments of thin cloud, or skimmed by glancing birds. He placed his painting in the corridor; and a thousand times, while he lay upon the grass, and imbibed the transparent noontide, he turned his eyes upon the tablet which bore so precious and potent a record of the vision of the previous evening. As the day closed in, his thoughts became more and more anxious; and, when at last the sun had set, no racer at the games ever stood prepared to start with a look of keener expectation, or with the blood coursing more wildly through his limbs, and eddying more hotly at his heart. Again, at the same spot of heaven, and encircled by the same constellations, Cleone was visible. The moon rose later than before; and till its disk appeared Phineus toiled delightedly at the picture. The third night she appeared again; and, when the dimness of the air began to brighten in the moonshine, he thought that her face grew

sad, and that, by a slight gesture of the hand and head, she indicated that she would appear no more. With a sigh he dropped his pencil, as she melted into the heavens; and for some moments he forgot that the picture was now completed, and that it displayed his sister even more perfectly and intensely beautiful than he had ever seen her when on earth.

The celestial figure had not vanished long, when a storm arose, and the moon was hidden in darkness. He turned from the agony of the elements without, and gazed upon that adored image, which had power to withdraw his heart from everything but the contemplation of its own loveliness, and the innumerable happy remembrances connected with it. But his attention to the outward world was soon excited; for it seemed to him that, in a brief pause of the tempest, he heard the well-remembered voice of Mycale chanting her wild incantations. With a shudder he crept to the corridor, and looked into the garden; and he beheld the queen, surrounded by those cypresses and cedars which were less black than the atmosphere, triumphing in a frenzied dance beneath the drowning rain, and her black hair, writhing features, and fierce gestures, illumined at intervals by the glare of lightning. Sometimes her song went forth in screams, accompanying the loudest fury of the whirlwind; and she stretched her hands, and

bared her throbbing bosom to the blast, and the dim torrent of waters. Anon she stooped like some agile beast of prey, and plucked from the drenched sod various plants of necromantic virtue; and again she started into a whirling dance, and muttered threats in which Phineus thought he could distinguish his own name, and shook her uplifted hand as if against him.

He shrunk away in horror; and through all the night the sounds of the tempest bore to his ears the accents of the terrible enchantress. His terror ended in stupefaction; and, when he unclosed his eyes, wild yells were still ringing around him. But after a moment's pause he discovered that these were the expressions of his father's insanity, and not of the vengeance of Mycale. The king approached his chamber; and he heard his own name mingled with the curses and ejaculations which broke from the lips of the madman. In another instant the door was burst open; and Nicon hurried into the chamber with a dagger in his hand; his limbs were dropping blood from wounds he had himself inflicted. He was rushing to the couch on which his son had sunk, when his eye was caught by the picture of Cleone. The lamp was still burning beside it in the darkness. The maniac knew the form of his daughter,—and the dagger fell from his grasp. He looked intently on the lovely and innocent maiden; and, when his son approached him, he

had fallen on his knees before her, and had clasped his forehead with his hands. His senses returned to him; and ere long the boy whom he had come to murder, was pressed by his embrace, and their tears were mingled. Mycale now entered the room, followed by her guards, and the beautiful savage warrior, her minion, and their commander. The first objects that met her eyes, were the picture of Cleone, and the father and son supporting each other beside it. The change that came over her form and features, rendered her a loathsome and horrible realization of all that we think of as most depraved; and when she commanded her followers to seize Nicon and Phineus, her lover flung away his sword, and fled from the palace to his native mountains; while the guards pointed through the open doorway to the sky, where they exclaimed that, amid the skirts of the receding tempest, the original of the heavenly form in the picture looked at them with a sad and awful aspect, which plucked the weapons from their grasp. None of them however had courage to arrest Mycale, who with a sneer of defiance walked through their array, and was no more seen.

The picture of Cleone was dedicated to Nemesis, and remained for many ages in the temple of the avenging Deity.

MELITA:

A FRAGMENT OF GREEK ROMANCE.

(*From the Athenæum for* 1829.)

MELITA was a maiden of Elis; and no fairer spirit had ever inhabited that peaceful land. Her beauty was known but to few; for her mother had long been dead; and her father was the humble dweller in an obscure abode. She had neither brother nor sister, and had seldom been seen by any eyes but those of her aged parent. His well-ordered industry and serene affection surrounded her with a clear unchanging life; and she scarcely knew of any variation in the world, but day and night, autumn and spring, the gradual whitening of her father's hairs, and the growth and impulse of her own feelings. As she approached to womanhood, her thoughts began to overleap the low grassy mound, with which the narrow plat of her existence had previously been encircled, and on which, even from her infancy, many bright phantoms had appeared to her to stand in the morning sunshine. Her wishes now attempted to follow the unknown flight of those gay shadows; and she longed to resemble them in rising with the lightness of a bird over the boundary which divided her from the busy and glittering world.

When Melita had reached her fifteenth year, the time came round for the celebration of the Olympic games. She heard from her father some short and broken accounts of the splendid festivals, at which he had frequently been present; and she was lost in bewildering excitement, while she fancied a succession of pageants led by glorious beings of whose forms she was utterly ignorant. But above all she was possessed by the resemblance, which she had wrought in her imagination, of the deity to whose honour these rites and contests had been instituted.

In the morning of the first day of the games, she almost unconsciously expressed, in her father's presence, her earnest longing to behold the bodily presence of the great Jupiter. The old man started out of his usual tranquillity of manner, and said to her, "Unhappy, my daughter, is the mortal to whom such a vision shows itself: he who has conversed with a god, is for ever unfitted to lead the life of earthly men. To eyes which long for the sight of superior natures, their desire is sometimes granted; but that for which they yearned is always fruitful of horror and destruction. I could tell you a prediction which your mother heard from the oracle; but...." He said no more; for the time had approached at which the solemnities were to begin; and he hastily left the house.

This conversation did not diminish the un-

easy mystery which filled the mind of Melita. All day she brooded over the thoughts which had occupied her; and, when her father returned in the evening, she was restless, eager, and confused. The dusk had come before his entry; and he had scarcely been able to speak to her, when a slight knock was heard, followed, as it seemed to them, by a faint groan. The old man turned the door on its sleepy hinges, and found a young man lying on the earth, who was evidently broken down by some malady. He lifted up the youth, and carried him into the house. The stranger was clothed in a remarkable dress, and appeared not more than eighteen. He was revived by the care of Melita and her father, but still continued feeble and suffering. They learned from his low and interrupted words, that he had come from one of the farthest Grecian islands, with the design of contending at the games for the prize of poetry. But he seemed almost delirious; and he told no connected tale. He remained for several hours pained in body and wandering in mind. Among other hints and ravings, he spoke some scattered phrases as to the magnificence and interest of the festivity, which he had seen on that day for the first time. He was then seized by the recollection of the ode which he had intended to recite on one of the subsequent days. The stanzas, which he murmured at intervals, were full of fervour, of

religious awe, and splendid images, and belonged to a lyrical description of the intercourse of Jupiter with mortal maidens. Some of the fragments were so passionate and impressive, and Melita listened with an interest so full of wonder and rapt excitement, that her father commanded her to retire, and leave the patient under his care.

She lay awake for several hours, and at last fell asleep, with a brain and bosom possessed by tumultuous and gorgeous visions. Early in the morning her father announced to her that the youth had in the night become much calmer, and that he had left him to obtain some short repose. When she had arisen, the boy was no longer to be found; but he had left his rich and remarkable dress behind him, and had only taken away an old mantle, which had been thrown over him by his host, while he lay on the couch. Her father added that he was now about to join the crowd at the games, and that he should not return till late in the evening. She placed herself in the room in which the youth had lain, and employed herself in putting together all she could remember of his strange and imperfect phrases, and in connecting them with the wishes and fantastic images which had filled her mind before. Near to her lay the garments which he had worn. Melita fixed her eyes on them; and she felt as if some unseen enchantment prevented her

from looking away, even for a moment. As the day closed in, the evening wind arose, and brought to her ears the distant applauses of the Grecian people gathered at their chief solemnity. She gazed and mused, and, after a struggle of fear, shame, curiosity, and vague wishfulness, could no longer resist the temptation. She hastily put on the dress of the poet, and left the house.

Her impetuous and winged feet bore her she knew not whither. In a short time she had moved a considerable distance, when she beheld a procession of worshippers, headed by the priests, and accompanied by many attendants. She joined their ranks, and was surprised to see that the youths in the service of the gods were clothed exactly as she was, so that she could pass without notice. The train advanced to the sacred grove which surrounded the Olympian temple; and here she beheld, with delight and astonishment, the long files of statues, which exhibited the conquerors at the games, with the emblems of the exercises in which they had triumphed. The evening light flowed beautifully through the interstices of the dark foliage, and fell with a soft illumination on the still and white heroic figures. The throng moved on; and, while the greater number placed themselves before the lofty and shadowy portico of the temple, a few of the priests and of their attend-

ant boys entered the building. Among these Melita ventured to glide; and, from the instant which gave her a glimpse of the god, she was insensible to all else.

She sank on the marble pavement in the shade of the gigantic deity, and watched his form as intently as the astrologer watches the star on which his destiny depends. The twilight was broken by the thin flames of a few distant censers; and it seemed to her that she discerned the limbs and features of the statue rather by some radiance of their own than by any outward beam. The calm and mighty face was more beautiful than all she had imagined. The brow was girded with olive, and appeared a bright throne for heavenly supremacy; the deep eyes were filled with a solemn and a lovely spirit; and she felt that she should rejoice to breathe away her soul upon that mouth, so awful and yet so sweet. The gleam of dusky gold on the garments in which Jupiter was clad, gave the semblance of a faint and floating glory; but all that was in the temple of distinguishable light gathered on the celestial countenance, and kept it, even when night had almost closed without, a visible revelation of the greatest god.

The girl was startled amid her adoration by a voice appearing to come from beyond the portico, and singing the words of the hymn, snatches of which had been uttered by the poet

in her father's house the day before. She thought, but could not be sure, that she recognised the same tones pronouncing the enthusiastic poetry of the ode which she had heard under such different circumstances; and they blended strangely with her own fearful ecstasy at the presence of the king of heaven. When this ode had been sung by a low but earnest voice, a single strophe of a different style and manner was vociferated in thundering music by the whole company of priests and novices. Scared by this overpowering sound, Melita shrank among the officiating train, and looked at the crowd of worshippers collected before the temple. She thought she recognised her father. Trembling and uncertain, she glided away; and, when she had gained the solitary wood, ran with all her speed through thickets of trees and groups of glimmering statues, which she feared were living pursuers; till, wearied and agitated, she reached her humble home. Her father speedily returned; but she had already changed her dress; and as soon as she had saluted him she retired to her chamber.

When she had thrown herself on her couch, she began to meditate on the occurrences of the last few hours. The hint of the oracular prediction,—the poet, with earnest tones, faint indeed and broken, but of exquisite sweetness,—the distant sounds of the multitude congregated around the stadium,—the long procession of priests and

worshippers, with the garlands and the incense,—the green twilight of the consecrated grove, and the white gleam of those unmoving marble champions;—all these were present to her mind; but chiefly the murmuring stillness of the vast temple, with the wavering flashes from the tripods, cutting the evening gloom, and, over all, the form, whose ivory limbs were wrapt in a golden shadow, the noblest exhibition of deified humanity, the king, the god, the beautiful, the one master of her soul, Jupiter, the wonder of Greece, and glory of the earth, filled, overawed, agitated, and attracted her.

The deep dark night was around her; and she had remained for an hour absorbed in these contemplations, when suddenly a bright blaze started at once from the wall, the floor, and ceiling of the chamber, and covered them as if with a fiery drapery. It gave out no heat, but flamed with a steady and topaz-like lustre. Melita gazed in astonishment at the wondrous light, which did not however scare her with any resemblance of an earthly conflagration. It burned for a few seconds; and, when she had in some degree overcome her first alarm by perceiving the innocence of the lights, innumerable snakes of the most various colours appeared to move and float along the walls, and to play in the lucid blaze. Green and white, black and crimson, blue, purple, and orange, starred with jewels, and streaked like the

tulip, they wove together, in that liquid illumination, a thousand knots and momentary devices. Arching themselves like the rainbow, or in ranks like some gorgeous oriental cavalry, they moved from the sides of the chamber to the ceiling, or twined around the simple furniture.

The serpents appeared to melt and mingle into each other, and were swallowed by the general splendour; and the burning boundaries of the room widened and receded, till they resembled the atmosphere of an evening sky, filled with the richest and most sparkling clouds. Amid these, as if disclosed from the burning disk of the sun, a large bird, of as brilliant plumage as the fabled Phœnix, flew forward, and passed before her. But soon it appeared to change its shape and lose its glory, and became a gigantic owl with round bright eyes. The evening prospect darkened into night: the white crescent of the moon stood over the shaded hills; and the grey bird perched on a rock which overhung the sea. The new moon in that world of witchery appeared to rise at nightfall, and for a moment she watched its silent ascent. A faint musical sound caused her to look away: on the rock where she had seen the owl alight, the young poet was now leaning. The sea glimmered at his feet; one arm rested on a projection of the crag; and his eyes were turned as her's had been to the diamond curve that adorned the darkness of the sky. She fan-

cied that in his countenance she discovered a resemblance to the pale and majestic loveliness of that statue of Jupiter, which to her was far more than a statue. Clouds came over the heavens and obscured the view. The youth was no longer visible; but a dull twilight covered the foreground; and through this two small red stars were burning. She looked at them intently, and shuddered at discerning the form of a gigantic lion, couched, as it seemed, at a little distance from her, and watching her with the glowing eyes which had first drawn her attention. He seemed to grow nearer and nearer to her; and the whole picture had soon disappeared, leaving nothing but the shaggy monster and the dim and narrow room. The lion rose, and with a light bound laid himself on the bed before her feet. The enormous shape became less terrible, when she was within its reach; and while her foot appeared to touch its flank, and its mane lay spread on part of the mantle, which in her terror she had let fall from around her, she thought that it was no more than an enormous and threatening shadow.

When the chaotic dimness of the chamber was dispersing into the clear transparency of a summer night, Melita remembered the tales she had heard of Proteus and his wonders; and the bewilderment of her mind had little of terror or suffering. The desert-shape which shared her

couch, rolled away amid the mist which now vanished from the room. Its fiery eye-balls seemed gradually to recede, till they were lost among the throng of stars that twinkled in the cloudless firmament. Wild troops of birds and insects fluttered around her; and trains of children, whose whispers were like distant tinklings, moved hither and thither bearing baskets of flowers. A pink light gradually spread through the air; and one of the children detached itself from the playful ring of its companions, and approached her. In that carnation splendour everything was hidden but the gentle, smiling boy, who seemed to walk on the charmed wind. His delighted eyes were fixed laughingly on her; and in another instant she had stretched her hands, and he was pressed to her uncovered bosom. She laid her head on the pillow; and he nestled in her arms, while she gazed with eager pleasure on the sunny locks that clustered round the brow of the infant, and strained to her side his round and rosy limbs.

But her countenance assumed a deeper meaning, and she trembled with emotion, when it seemed to her that the lines of that baby loveliness became stronger and more expressive, that the eye darkened and spoke earnestly to her's, and that the lips were pressed with more than childish passion on her quivering mouth; when she thought that in this young visitant she could

recognise at every moment a nearer likeness to the island poet. But soon this resemblance also escaped from her. The forehead became more lovely, the features nobler and more radiant; the gleam, as of a golden cloak thrown off, was spread under his finely proportioned limbs; and now for the first time she perceived, among the dark brown hair, the slender olive-wreath, and in all the form and look, the well remembered presence of the Olympic god.

On the next morning, when the father of Melita was leaving his house, he informed his daughter that the young stranger whom they had aided, was on that day to be crowned as the successful poet. Scarcely had he departed, when, seized with an impetuous frenzy, she rushed away to the place where the festival was held. The poet had not appeared; and the prize was given to the second of the competitors. But it was a deadly crime in any woman to approach the spot; and Melita, before the eyes of all the people, and of her white-haired father, was precipitated from a rock into the river Alpheus; such being the punishment appointed from of old for her offence.

"Heavily, O my daughter!" said the aged man, "have the maxims of the wise, and the prediction of the oracle been fulfilled in thee!"

CYDON.

From the Athenæum for 1829.

THE decay and corruption of Athens were more beautiful and impressive than ever was the decline of any other state. When, instead of severe religion and venerable laws, no power remained in the city of Pallas but the genius of Pericles, he concealed and brightened the ruins of ancient virtue with so much of intellectual excitement and refined pleasure, that men could scarcely fail to doubt whether the most solid and living substance of Good were worth the sparkling and intoxicating delusions which had been substituted for it.

At this time the abode of one extraordinary woman furnished a kind and a variety of enjoyments, to which the world had till then beheld nothing at all similar, and attracted a society in which the most celebrated and wonderful minds of Athens were proud to find a place. Aspasia, the mistress, the queen, the inspiring goddess of this spot, in which so many sources of amusement, so many persons of renown were brought together, was herself more fascinating and remarkable than aught or any one within the pale of delight that surrouneed her. Her beauty was of the

most voluptuous Ionian mould, illuminated and strengthened by an intellect such as had belonged to no woman before her, and has probably been given to very few in later times. The large dark eyes of her country were in her of the richest and deepest loveliness, and served moreover to aid the expression of an eloquence, from which Pericles, the glory of Athenian speakers, and Socrates, as drawn by Plato, borrowed the awful peals and subtle lightnings of their noblest discourses. Her form had the perfect symmetry required by sculptors, and so seldom discovered except in a few of their productions; and its movements satiated the eye and the fancy with the airy softness peculiar to the females of the Asiatic shore. But that form and inimitable grace appeared endowed with a new charm, when displayed in the mimic dances, which embodied the conceptions of poetry in images of a beauty far more exquisite, and far, alas! more fleeting, than that of the painter's creation. To all this must be added, that her knowledge of poetry and the arts put her on a level with the dramatists, the singers, the sculptors, and architects, who were themselves the delight of Greece, and who sought more eagerly for her approbation of their skill, than for that of their whole nation assembled at Elis or Corinth. Her manners moreover were marked with the most admirable ease, gentleness, and spirit; and she alone of those women, who

have rashly wandered for applause beyond the circle of their homes, was able to conceal, if not subdue, the restless cravings of vanity, which are so much less satisfactory to others after the first moments of their surprise and excitement, than even the indifference of stagnant dulness.

The house in which she lived was one of the largest and handsomest at Athens, where the appearance of the private buildings was strongly contrasted with the ample magnificence of the public edifices. Aspasia, to whom, as a foreigner, the state was less a source of enjoyment and dignity, than to women connected with it by legal rights and sacred privileges, had felt the want of a domestic importance and splendour, that should in some sort afford her compensation. Pericles had gratified her taste and ambition; and his riches, and the admiration of the wealthiest and most powerful Athenians, and of the most accomplished artists in the world, had filled her abode with foreign rarities, with the most delicately shaped and painted vases, and with innumerable graceful devices in bronze and marble. Her apartments might thus have been thought a new Delphi, consecrated to Eros and the Graces, and as brilliantly ornamented with appropriate offerings and master-pieces, as was the Temple of Apollo with the trophies or spoils of victory, the offerings of cities, the statues of heroes and of gods.

Hither congregated the men, whose names have

been through all succeeding time the watchwords of genius and glory. Anaxagoras, the philosopher, and Cratinus, the comic poet, in his extreme old age, brought their wisdom and their wit to the society of Aspasia. Sophocles delighted his beautiful hostess with a temper full of higher and more genial poetry, than all the eloquence in which Euripides exaggerated his sensibility, his passions, and his scepticism. The young Thucydides came to be instructed in civil knowledge by Pericles, to whom the younger Socrates in turn taught a deeper and more precious lore. When Gorgias attempted to declaim or to dispute, he was gravely conquered or laughably parodied by Aspasia. Panænus consoled himself in her company at his painting's having been excelled by Timagoras; and Phidias and Ictinus drew from her the inspiration and rules of those wonders of architecture and sculpture, which she had incited Pericles to command, and the execution of which was submitted to her judgement by the immortal artists. And Pericles himself, the general, the orator, the statesman, the hand, the tongue, the eye, and genius of Athens, while he displayed his love for her with a grave and devoted enthusiasm, maintained with playful dignity his immense superiority in will and in station over all who approached him.

Among the acquaintances of Aspasia, the women were not the least celebrated nor the least

admired. Aspasia herself stood prominently forth, as of a different rank and fame from her whole sex. The constant and respectful attachment of Pericles would alone have been sufficient to procure her this estimation; but it was still more certainly secured by her own powers. Yet, though endowed with rarer beauty and faculties than all others, she was still the representative of a numerous class. The increase of luxury, the excessive refinement of taste and sensibility, the sharpened hunger for excitement of every kind, in a city where the intellect and the arts were so highly cultivated, the direction which this love of pleasure had taken towards the enjoyments of fancy and sympathy,—all this had created a demand for a species of social relaxation and of female intercourse, very different from what had been known in Greece in the days of its domestic simplicity. In the same way the love of the fine arts, of polished society, of fame, whose chosen haunt was the Acropolis and Agora of Athens, and of wealth, which commerce and political power had heaped in the same city,—this complicated feeling had drawn many a soft, impassioned, and accomplished Asiatic maid of Greek extraction to the spot which united more prizes for vanity, sensibility, and ambition, than all the world beside. Of such women, the most beautiful, the best instructed, the most attractive entreated permission to appear in the house of Aspasia.

Nor was she to be very severely blamed for the character she played, and for the associates with whom it connected her. The force of her talents, the fiery eagerness of her longings for the gratification of the intellect, had brought her to the polite and brilliant capital of the Ionian tribes. Her habits, and her affection for Pericles detained her there; yet so long as she made it her residence her marriage was necessarily invalid, her children illegitimate, and she could hardly avoid the company of women, whose country, class, and position were in most respects the same as her own. Nothing therefore could be more splendid, nothing more animating, nothing more seductive, than the female band who shone and smiled, sang, danced, and acted, revelled and conversed in the apartments of Aspasia, and alternately amused and excited the wisest and most famous of their male contemporaries.

Such were the members of an assembly, which frequently met, and always with fresh desire to meet again, and with fresh admiration of Aspasia. On one of these occasions the conversation turned on sculpture; and Phidias took the opportunity of saying that he had lately obtained a new and distinguished pupil, a young Athenian, by name Cydon, who had spent several years at Sicyon in the school of Polycletus, and had now returned to his native city, and placed himself under the great rival sculptor. "His genius,"

added the master, "is of the highest order; and he alone has satisfied me in executing the works, with which thou, O Pericles! hast commanded me to adorn the temples of the gods. But not in executing alone; for, by Apollo, his own designs are so excellent, that I begin to feel more jealous of him than of Polycletus himself."

"And what," inquired Aspasia, "are the particular merits which thou discoverest in his productions?"

"I had almost answered," he replied, "that his works have all the perfections which sculpture ought, or is able to exhibit. But I think that he is especially remarkable for the life and eager motion with which he seems to inspire figures in full youth and activity. He has lately wrought an Atalanta in clay, as graceful and airy as our young friend Dryope. And he alone has satisfied me by the groups of the Lapithæ and Centaurs, which he has added to those designed by myself."

"A mighty praise!" said the mistress of Pericles; "I should like to see thy Sicyonian wonder."

"That will be difficult," answered the master; "for he is wrapt up in his art; and I believe that, if I could induce him to steal an hour from the chisel, and to visit thee, he would see, even in thyself and Dryope, no more than models to be studied and copied."

"And dost thou think," she asked, "that there would be nothing for a woman to be vain of, in

supplying so accomplished an artist as this Cydon with examples for his nymphs and goddesses? Thou shalt bring him hither to-morrow. If he will speak of nothing else, he shall rave the eloquent mysteries of his art, until we believe that Destiny, and Night, and Heaven, the earliest Powers, were mighty sculptors, and that in statuary alone are to be found the true harmony and purpose and ideal model of human existence."

The morrow and its evening came, and brought Cydon to the house of Aspasia. The day and hour was unpropitious to the sculptor. He had before been indifferent to all things but his own pursuit. Engaged in it he had been tranquil, cheerful, happy. He was now thrown among those, who to a relish for the arts as lively, if not so deep and devoted, as his own, added eloquence and wit and beauty, and noble and winning manners, and a thousand accomplishments. At first he was surprised and bewildered, then dazzled, then delighted, then seduced. The Dryope, whose name has before been mentioned, was younger than Aspasia, and a native of her own Miletus. Pleased by the fresh and simple spirit of the young sculptor, and amused by the wondering eagerness with which he enjoyed those pleasures of society he had never known before, she bestowed a degree of attention and favour on him, which many of the wealthiest and greatest men in Athens could neither purchase nor command. Is it strange

that Cydon should have been gratified, attracted, overpowered? His sacred enthusiasm for his divine art was laid asleep. His love of ideal beauty haunted him no more. It seemed to him that keenness and reality had been wanting in the most cherished of his past enjoyments.

The effect of his new state of mind on the productions of his chisel soon became visible. The simple severity, the harmonious unity, which had before distinguished his designs, disappeared; and his statues began to address themselves to the vulgar eye, to the senses, to the passions, the excitement of which precludes the pleasures of the imagination, and the love of the consistent, the abstract, the austerely beautiful. Aspasia smiled, while Phidias sighed, at the disease, the madness of Cydon. He meanwhile, uninitiated in the schools of philosophy, and accustomed to reflect on nothing but the laws of outward grace and perfection, knew not his own temper or condition. He felt that his calmness, his self-reliance, his reverence for his art were diminished or destroyed; but he knew not why. He cherished a vehement and almost delirious passion for Dryope: but he could not explain why it was, that, in the intervals of mental excitement, he was overpowered by an aching discontent.

After a few months of this fluctuating and painful existence, his temper became uncertain;

and his intellectual vivacity broke forth only in fits, which were commonly followed by pauses of sullen silence, or by bursts of bitter sarcasm against himself and all mankind. Dryope began to treat him with disdainful coldness, or ridicule, half playful, half severe; and at last Cydon determined to re-assert his former self-command, and went to the house of Aspasia, where he expected to meet Dryope, for the purpose of bidding her farewell. She was not there. Her lover was angry at himself and her, and sat mute and apart. But Socrates, who delighted to cope with all men in their strangest moods, and who was then young and adventurous, placed himself beside the sculptor, and began to converse with him in his unostentatious method, so singularly fit for concealing his design and for obtaining its accomplishment. Their dialogue was long and various; and till near its conclusion Cydon did not suspect that it had any particular reference to his state of mind. But, when the philosopher arose and bade him good evening, he began to consider the purport of all they had been saying; and he found that the causes and nature of the delusive temptations to which he had for months been yielding, were laid open before him with a clearness of which he had no previous experience. Self-reproach and the resolution of amendment divided his soul; and he left the house of Aspasia in many respects an altered man.

The evening had closed in, when Cydon began to walk alone and moody in the outskirts of Athens. He mused with sorrow on his wasted days and lost tranquillity; and the thoughts as to the origin and destiny of man, which had been excited in him by the conversation of Socrates, revived and gained augmented power. His gloomy meditations and doubts were suddenly interrupted, when he found himself in the neighbourhood of a vast multitude gathered around and beneath a grove of trees, which appeared as mere masses of uncertain shadow in the deepening twilight. Throughout the crowd there was a hum and stir of expectation. Cydon pressed among them, in the hope of making his way to the other side of an assemblage, in which he felt no interest: but he soon found himself one of the innermost ring of spectators, who encompassed a large level space in the centre of the grove.

Near him stood an altar, on which priests and elders were offering sacrifice. After a few minutes proclamation was made in a loud voice, that whoever wished to take part in the sacred torch-race should come forward. About twenty young men presented themselves, and threw off their mantles. To each of them a torch was given. When the last had been supplied, Cydon fancied that he heard a clear, steady whisper at his ear, saying, "Thou too, O Cydon! must engage in the torch-race, and struggle for the prize." He could

not account for the violence of the impulse, which led him to lay aside his cloak, and range himself among the competitors. A moment's delay had taken place; and the people shouted their joy, when in the light of the altar they saw another candidate step forward and ask for a torch.

The runners were ranged in line. A flame at a distance was pointed out to them as the goal round which they were to pass, and so return to the altar; and each was then desired to kindle his torch at the sacred fire. One prayed to Jupiter, another to Venus, a third to Pallas, a fourth to the Dioscuri. Cydon prayed not at all; but he sighed to think how little even Dryope would now care to hear of his success. While this thought was passing through his mind, he seemed to hear the same unknown voice, which had before addressed him, exclaim, "O! Fire, which didst first give life to the soul of man, be thou propitious to Cydon." He started and looked hastily round; but he could only see the sharp lights and deep masses of shadow amid the band of priests and rivals, and the red and flitting gleams on a few of the thousands of earnest faces that encircled him. The stars were still dim above; and the sky appeared to weigh with a load of darkness on the assembly.

In another instant the signal had been given; and the runners, bearing the torches in their hands, had sprung forward on their course. He

who first returned to the altar with his torch still burning, was to be the conqueror. The troop rushed on, gleaming and flashing, like a rout of phantoms, each armed with a meteor. The voices of the multitude broke forth into a wild shout as they burst away; and then succeeded a breathless silence, while the spectators attempted to make out the fate of each competitor. One by one the torches were seen to be extinguished; and before they had reached the turning point, the numbers were reduced to less than half of those which had begun the race. But to the persons round the altar the excitement of the spectacle was much augmented; for the faces of the youths were now visible; and every instant brought them nearer to the goal. The rapid limbs were at first scarcely discernible; but the lights blazed on the eager countenances, and, as they glanced along, threw a momentary glare on the pressing line of spectators, who, as soon as the contending racers passed by, closed in like a wave of the sea behind them. At length but two candidates remained. The foremost panted violently, but covered his mouth with his hand, lest his breathing should agitate the flame. They were now hard by the altar; and the hinder of the rivals had but a second for his final effort. With a long bound he passed his antagonist, whose torch was extinguished in the same moment by the rush of air. As to the first at the goal, and to him

whose torch had alone remained unextinguished, the prize was adjudged to Cydon. The multitude shouted again, as if for an Athenian victory, at the triumph of one whose name scarcely ten among them had ever heard before.

The youth escaped as speedily as possible from the crowd, and took his way through the most gloomy and retired portion of the grove. When he had reached a spot of almost entire darkness, he leaned against the stem of a large plane-tree, and began to meditate, what, why, and whence he was, by what laws called on to guide himself, and destined to what end.

"Knowest thou," said the low and piercing voice, which he had twice heard already that evening, "knowest thou in what solemnity thou hast been engaged, and victorious?" Surprised and awe-struck as Cydon was, he had scarcely courage to answer; and before he could say "No," the voice continued: "The altar in this grove is sacred to Prometheus, to the Titan who animated man by fire from heaven. In his honour those torches were kindled, and the prize instituted which was won by thee. It is thy destiny to seek out the cave, in which the flame, brought by him from the sun, is still burning. Frame, as thou art skilled, a woman; and enliven her with that immortal fire. So shall thy happy fate be accomplished; and so shall I be freed."

Cydon became a wanderer on the earth. In

the midst of solitudes, at the depth of night, that startling and mournful voice had come to him, and told him that the release of the warning spirit from its misery depended on his success in discovering the cave of Prometheus, and in achieving the task assigned to him. The weary and painful enterprise more than once disgusted the sculptor. He turned aside from his lonely pilgrimage, and plunged into the crowds of cities. His journeying in the deserts of the world had not indeed given him the knowledge of the spot he was in search of; but he had often carelessly collected golden ingots pure from the rude native moulds of the rocks, and in wastes marked with the footsteps of the lion, and crevices inhabited by serpents, had gathered caskets of beryl and emerald. With these he had the means of displaying royal state, and purchasing unbounded pleasures; but at the moments when his soul was about to sink into vanity and self-indulgence, he was scared and roused by that pursuing voice. He appeared for an instant in a popular assembly, a way-worn citizen in a foreign garb: but in the tumult that followed his first solemn and menacing words, the unfailing voice came shrill and commanding to his ear; and he turned and fled. Nor was it clearly determined afterwards, whether he had been a messenger from the guardian deities of the city, or a criminal haunted by the Furies. He rushed into a field of battle, and broke violently through

a phalanx of spears; and when he was hailed as meriting the prize of valour, by those whom he had recklessly aided, a whisper overpowered the crash of arms and clang of trumpets, and compelled him to resume his solitary and dreary travels.

"I too," pronounced the voice, "was myself, like thee, the foremost in the torch-race. I too undertook this enterprise; but I was turned aside by folly and weakness. Ages have passed away; and I am still a miserable wanderer: nor can I be released from my suffering but by thy success; and if thou shalt yield to any delusive temptation, and forego the task thou hast entered on, such as is my destiny, such will be thine."

Seven years of watching and labour and fruitless hope had been spent by Cydon since the night he departed from Athens. He found himself at last in the midst of loftier and wilder eminences than any he had before seen. Masses of rock and sharp crags showed themselves on all sides among thickets and patches of rank herbs. Above, the breasts of the mountains rose immensely, distinct with various shades of barrenness; and the ice-peaks and frozen precipices towered over all, white, green, azure, and sparkling. Down an abrupt ravine a cataract tumbled and roared, and, from the point where Cydon stood, was only discernible by the smoke-like

vapour and foam that hung in a wavering cloud over the black and solid phalanx of pine-trees. A sheer, immeasurable descent, dark with foliage, lay at his feet; and far below, through a cleft of the hills, the grey straight line of the ocean was faintly visible. The distant vultures were flying heavily, like slow specks in the air, around their desolate haunts; and the rustling of the forest reached his ear, mingled with the echoing howl of beasts of prey.

But the wanderer turned from the prospect before him, and examined a natural archway, under the shadow of which he was standing. It was the mouth of a cavern, the roof of which lifted itself to a vast height, and which extended far into the mountain. To him who was placed beneath it, and who was looking outwards, it appeared like some great proscenium, through which might be beheld a scene of awful savageness and immensity. The depth of gloom within defied all scrutiny of the eye; and Cydon felt a trembling eagerness and solemn wonder, while he thought that he had now perhaps arrived at the spot which was to be the term of his journeyings, and which was so much more important to him than any other on earth. He offered up a silent prayer to the mighty powers whose sanctuary he had approached; and after bathing in the waters of a spring, that rose on the threshold of the cave

and then flowed down the mountain, he prepared to penetrate into the furthest recesses of that dark solitude.

He did not dare to supply himself with a torch; for he knew that no earthly fire must approach the spot where the flame of heaven burnt. A few paces therefore brought him into complete night. The walls of rock were drawn more closely together; the pathway descended rapidly; and the Athenian pursued his journey through those unknown depths with blind but cautious intrepidity. He had advanced a great distance, when he heard a rush of waters sounding as if below him. By feeling around he discovered that he was on the edge of a chasm; and balancing himself on the extreme verge, and stretching forward to the utmost, he touched a barrier of stone, which, if he had been on the other side of the abyss, would have prevented all further progress. He had no choice therefore, but either to return or to descend into the cleft. He did not hesitate long. Hanging by his hands on the brink, he let down his feet, and reached a narrow and uncertain resting-place. The rude natural wall, down which he was climbing, descended further than the deepest well ever excavated by man; and Cydon was constantly in the most imminent danger of perishing. At length, by the increasing loudness of the water, he knew that he had to encounter a different peril. He touched the stream with his

feet, determined either to wade or swim across it; but the violence of the torrent rendered either plan impracticable; and being desperately resolved to perform what he had undertaken, or die, he leaped in the black darkness, with the hope of attaining the other side. He fell in the water, but soon reached the stony bank; and thence, through a long maze of winding passages, he pursued his way, till, on turning round a sharp angle in the rock, he saw the cavern he had sought, and the sacred fire.

The place was an immense hall, in the centre of which the flame was burning, raised on no altar, nor fed with any fuel, but hanging at the height of a man's knee above the bare granite floor. It was of the size and brightness of the noon-day sun, but of a more irregular form and wavering splendour. An immeasurable vista of rock stretched on all sides; and when Cydon came in sight of the subterranean luminary, he had still a long journey before he could reach it. No relic, no monument, no inscription on the eternal cliffs and vast expanse of stone, recorded that this had been the retreat and workshop of the Titan. The flame itself was a sufficient evidence; and when the Athenian drew near to it, he bowed to the ground, and, amid the boundless and lonely silence that surrounded him, heard the quick throbbings of his own awe-stricken bosom.

He believed himself under the guidance of a

wonderful destiny. With equal labour, but less of anxiety than before, he retraced his way to upper earth and the light of day; but he found at his return that it was already midnight; and weary and happy he sank to sleep.

Cydon determined that thenceforth the outer cavern should be his abode, and the spot sacred to his labours. From the woods around he brought the materials for a couch of moss and leaves, which he laid in a recess at one side of the gigantic chamber. The fountain supplied him with his only and sufficient beverage. The thickets and brakes of the vallies abounded in wild fruitage and various kinds of nuts; and in these he was to find his food. He armed himself with a knotty staff, sufficient in his youthful and vigorous hands to slay all but the fiercest and most powerful of the savage animals; and with their skins he purposed to clothe himself. Thus prepared in all necessary respects for his future life, the Athenian began to range over those solitary vallies, and to climb the rugged precipices.

He sought on all sides for the means requisite to the fulfilment of his enterprise; and wandering far and boldly in an unknown land, he was often benighted at a distance from the cave, and saw the stars rise from a sea on which no sail ever glided, or cross the gap of sky over some narrow gorge, which no human steps had before trodden. After the search and labour of months, he suc-

ceeded in collecting a mass of iron ore. With his own hands he built a furnace, and heaped the branches of wood which were to feed its fire. Thus he obtained steel sufficient to construct tools and weapons; and he rejoiced to have made so long a stride towards accomplishing his design.

When once or twice, during these months of toil, his hand and resolution for a moment failed him, he was startled and warned from the forest by the groans of his invisible pursuer; and thus urged, he resumed his labour, and so far successfully performed it.

He again began to search the wilderness for those of its productions which were needful to him. From the banks of streams, and from nooks on the rocky shore of the ocean, he gathered the purest sands, the whitest and smoothest clay. Among the mountains he obtained fragments of the most transparent alabaster, and every metal that enriches the coffers in the dark, antique treasuries of the earth. With these materials he began to plan the work. During many days and nights a shadow appeared to flit around him, which perpetually mocked his grasp, and changed its aspect. For a moment he thought he had sight of the image which he was called on to embody; but before he could fix on it a steady gaze, it turned into the smiling and voluptuous form of Dryope; and then it seemed that she too departed, and left only the spectral and invisible

presence of the unknown being who had so often warned and excited him.

When unable to gain the idea he was searching for, he recurred to all the sculptured or living beauty he had ever seen, in the faint hope of constructing the form for which he longed from these recollections. But each confused or effaced the others; and in no single image of his memory did he find the characteristics he required. At last he was wearied out by many efforts, and fevered by fruitless anxiety. Absorbed and harassed by his thoughts, he had long forgotten to supply himself with needful sustenance; and he sank exhausted on the rocky floor of the cavern. The wide entrance grew dark with night; and slowly and painfully he became aware that figures were shaping themselves in light on the dusky groundwork. They passed along the sky in gliding procession, with the swift and easy pace of dreams. First came the stately Cybele, and then a group of queens with diadems, laurelled priestesses, and prophetic virgins bearing the lyre. To these succeeded the wild mountain women of Arcadia and Thessaly, strangely clothed, some armed like hunters, some wielding the implements of sorcery. They were followed by a band of captive maidens, weeping and chained, the spoil of a city,—and these by a giddy troop of Bacchantes, striking high their cymbals and tambourines, waving branches laden with purple grapes, leading the leopard and the young

lion in leashes of vine-boughs, and mingled with laughing children, and pursued by reeling fauns. A space of darkness divided them from a company of Spartan mothers, attired as they were wont to be for the festivals of their mythology. But the last figures of the train were far less grave and matronly than those who preceded them, and could scarcely be distinguished from the foremost shapes in a knot of those beautiful singers and flute-players and dancers, whom Cydon had seen before. They turned their eyes on him; and he fancied for an instant that he recognised the features and look of Dryope, when they all faded away. Soon on the dim void a stern, gigantic shadow moved along, with his left hand pressed upon his heart, where the vengeance of Jove had struck, and his right uplifted as if in fixed and triumphant resolution. It was the form of Prometheus. Behind him glided Mercury the life-giver, and Pallas; and between them Cydon beheld a lovely being, the image he so long had sought. An earnest calm, a youthfulness as if from the land of the morning, pervaded the lovely phantom, and inspired the rapt artist.

With a glad spirit and hopeful confidence Cydon began his labour. The waters of the fountain, the salt waves of the sea, fire and sunlight, and the animating air were all employed by him to purify or melt or mingle the materials he had collected. The flame which he had

kindled under the arch of the cavern, and fed with branches of pine and oak, blazed nightly like a beacon, unbeheld by any eyes but his, and, to him when returning belated from his search for food, seemed glowing with a strange glare, and as if it might well have gathered around it a wild company of robbers, and fair forest witches, and horned satyrs. By these toils he at last succeeded in obtaining the pure and beautiful substance, of which the new offspring of his art and mistress of his soul was to be framed. It united the whiteness and polish of the pearl, and might have been thought akin, like it, to the spray of the ocean, from which the goddess of beauty rose, and whose mighty and secret spirit was the parent of Prometheus.

The artist drew no design, and shaped no model: possessed by the vision he had seen, he found his only and sufficient rule in it. Slowly and reverentially he attempted to realize it in his work; and he trembled like a votary who handles the most awful symbols of his religion, while he smoothed and adapted the plates, as thin and delicate as layers of the finest shell, or steeped them in the transparent waters, or softened them with gentle heat. From the first hours of his labour he felt as if the imperfect shape had been animated by a sentient consciousness, could mourn and reproach him for a moment's neglect, and long like him for the completion of his task,

Therefore with a beating heart he daily flew, at the instant of his waking, to the mute idol of his worship; and the freshness of the morning air, the singing of the birds, the sunshine tempered by the winds and by the overarching rock, and the beautiful expanse of landscape gave him a new pleasure, from a faint but constant feeling of sympathy between him and the fair image of his hands. He often pursued his occupation till long after the moon had risen between the hills. The red light of the fire shone on the projecting crags; and the pale rays of the luminary beamed unbroken on the statue, which glittered as if of more exquisite substance than silver or ivory; while a low murmur breathed from the forest, the fountain whispered at his feet, and it even seemed to Cydon that a dreamy song came from the stars and ocean, and was inly repeated by the shape, at the perfecting of which he so devoutly toiled. While the spirit-like light of Heaven was reflected by the polished limbs and bosom, and the glory was only interrupted by the moving shadow of the sculptor's head and hands, he felt as if engaged in an act purer, less earthly, and holier, than had ever before presented itself to his thoughts. The shape gained splendour and a celestial life from the beams which illumined it, and which almost belonged as a natural halo to the still severity, the innocent youthfulness, the composed lightness, and winning dignity of its aspect.

Yet, even when the work was on the point of being completed, the long continuance of labour, and the depression which follows extreme joy, had nearly withdrawn Cydon from his appointed task. The image of Dryope still haunted him in the flush of her youthful, seductive beauty; and the sculptor was at last so maddened by the memory of his early passion, and the loveliness of the vision, that he was rushing to pursue her, when the melancholy cry of the unseen warder rang from the woods below. The delusive shape vanished from his eyes, and returned no more.

Seven years had passed since Cydon reached the cave. The figure was perfected; and he looked on his fair achievement with a passionate yet religious love. He threw himself on the ground before it, and gazed at it for hours. The one hand drooped in front; the other was half extended from the bosom, and raised to the level of the head. A tranquil smile slept on the lips; and the eyes which were bent towards him, looked as if waiting to beam with intelligence and affection. Such a creature might have glided from the evening star, and would have stood thus tranquil, thus exquisite, thus delicately pure, seeming, amid that dark rock, those gloomy woods, and that barbarous ruggedness of prospect, a being of a brighter and sublimer element than earth includes or man imagines.

"Soon, soon," exclaimed the Sculptor, "shall

this white rose-bud open its leaves to the sunshine, breathe in the air of heaven, and tremble at my touch with life and love."

He hastily built an altar of stone before the image, and heaped precious gums on it and boughs of fragrant wood. He then framed a torch that would burn slowly and long; and thus prepared he again descended into the earth. He encountered the same difficulties and dangers as before, and overcame them with equal courage. Again he reached the Hall of the Sun-Flame, which glowed as intensely as when he first saw it. He prayed to the genius of the place, and invoked the name of the Titan, and then with reverence and determination kindled his torch in that dazzling fire. The parent blaze died on a sudden; and its extinction was accompanied by an overpowering peal, which seemed to shake the primeval earth around him: but his torch still burned and lighted him on his way through the dark abysses of the world. He bore it across the river, and climbed the perilous ascent beyond. It still beamed in his hand when he reached the upper cave; and with trembling anxiety, in the darkness of the night, he applied it to the fuel on the altar. The flame rose bright and clear, a pillar of glory; but suddenly it broke and wavered, and seemed to cling and adapt itself to the limbs of the statue, which quivered as it were with the first thrill of life, and welcomed

the light to its bosom. But the work of Cydon's hands dissolved and fell away, and disclosed the new and beautiful creature, to whom it had served as a husk or chrysalis. He too sank and expired. The last sound that pierced his ears, was a cry of joy from the forest, which told the relief of his pursuer. The last sight that filled his eyes, was the look of the ascending maiden, who, as she rose aloft into that starry sky, turned on him a look of affection, and beckoned his spirit to follow her from the earth.

THE SUBSTITUTE FOR APOLLO.

From the Novel of Arthur Coningsby.

THE eyelids of Jupiter were closed, not in sleep, but inward contemplation. Suddenly his eagle fanned him with its broad wings, and screamed. He opened his eyes, and looked through the crystal floor of heaven at the worlds which were spread below as on a map. He saw mountains shaking down avalanches, and stormy seas, and plains covered with carnage, and palaces filled with crime. He beheld vast deserts tyrannized over by the lion and the serpent, cities where men were wronging and corrupting one another, and all the complication of good and evil. He saw that all was moving in obedience to general laws; and he was undisturbed. But he perceived the corpse of his servant, the Cyclops, on a mountain, and half shaded by the forest, half illuminated by the glare of the volcano. The breast and forehead of the giant were transfixed by the arrows of ethereal fire. The deed had been done by the hand of Apollo, in revenge for the death of his son, whom Jupiter had slain with Cyclopean thunderbolts.

That evening, while the herdsmen and retainers

of Admetus were in arms to protect the flocks and cattle of the chieftain against wild beasts and robbers, and were lighting their watch-fires on the Molossian hills, a youth suddenly appeared among them, clad in a rustic dress, with a boar-spear in his hand, and a small stringed instrument slung over his shoulder beside his bow and quiver.

He said that he had lost his way, and should be glad to remain with them, provided they would furnish him with subsistence in return for his services in hunting and tending cattle. They readily assented to his proposal; and he sat down beside a fire, with the glare of which the last rays of sunset were mingling.

The stranger was Apollo, exiled from the skies by Jupiter, and compelled to take refuge on earth. Fresh from divine converse, the god of poetry knew how to temper himself to the humblest as well as the most exalted natures. Although his eyes were sometimes turned in momentary glances towards that occidental empire, which was now saddening for its departed lord, his jest and roundelay, his narrative of achievements in love and war, and his tales of ghosts and enchanters were delightful to the ears of the peasants round him, and were received with loud applauses, which rang through all the hills, and startled the wolf crouching in the distant brake. He touched his instrument, and sang of

the fair nymphs, of the youthful foresters whom they have chosen to live with them in the woods, and of the dogs baying round the thickets which concealed their master, or lying down to die on the verge of the fountain in which he had vanished. His voice then mounted swiftly and clearly towards the stars, and spread like a silver vapour across the valley; and the pause of silent gladness among his auditors was only interrupted by a faint echo of the last notes from the opposite crags and the bare mountain wall.

The god lived on among the shepherds. In every hunting match he was a bold assistant, in every festival a mirthful companion, on the lonely hill-side a friend, and a sage prophet of the weather. To him was given the honour of laying at the feet of Admetus the head of the wild boar and the wolf, and the choicest portions of the slain stag; and the maidens, as they danced over the knolls, or lingered at the fountain, had their quickest and softest looks for him.

The god comprehended all the thoughts of the mountaineers, excelled in all their arts, sympathized with all their sorrows, and delighted in all their enjoyments. He was filled with the spirit of poetry, which, in whatever region it may be thrown, and in whatsoever forms of being immersed, is itself knowledge and power.

Meanwhile the absence of the deity from the celestial palaces was lamented by their inmates;

and Jupiter saw that a gloom had gathered on the faces of the Immortals. He was indignant that the presence of the criminal whom he had banished, should be thus important to his race; and he commanded Hermes to bring from earth some human visitant, who might supply the place of the exile.

The herald thought that, among the chosen companions of Apollo, he should be most likely to find a substitute for him. The rough sandals of a Molossian shepherd were soon treading on that crystal floor, into which jewels of all hues seemed to have been melted; and his rude limbs and weather-beaten features appeared among those translucent forms. At first the peasant remained silent and trembling; but, when he had drunk of the mighty wine, he began to talk of flocks and fields, and to express contempt for Admetus, whom he compared in his thoughts with the radiant beings around him. He awoke stupefied and staring among his brethren on his native hills, and uttered broken ravings against his master, which were repaid by blows and curses.

Hermes next introduced a lawyer, who had just reached his home triumphant after gaining an important cause. His conversation was full of contemptuous jests and eager contradictions. He wrested the laws of the universe to prove that evil is good, and good evil. Hermes there-

fore conducted him again to earth, and gave him an ample purse of gold, as a fee. But, when the lawyer attempted to use the coin, he was apprehended for passing money not recognised by the state, and put on his trial. He made a long and brilliant speech, in which he described all that had happened to him, not omitting to report his own conversation; and he so well convinced the judges, that the priests of Jupiter were authorized to appropriate the money which had come from heaven.

The next candidate for the throne of Apollo was a soldier. He entered completely armed, as he had been found on his post. He looked with admiration at the helmet of Pallas, and the shield of Mars, and was dazzled by the resplendent beauty of the goddesses. But that presence and that banquet admitted not of repose; and for exertion there was no object. He sat confused and silent, until the goblet did its office, and he sank into heavy slumber. When he recovered his consciousness, he felt the night-wind on his brow, and was keeping ineffectual ward before the camp.

An orator from the public assembly was then presented; and he, when he had tasted of the wine-cup, arose, laid his hand upon his breast, and, discoursing in smooth rhetoric of himself and the deities, showed by much argument and many illustrations, that his most becoming de-

meanor towards them would be one of modest humility. But before he reached the peroration, he found himself addressing the assembled people, who were delighted at hearing those epithets applied to them, which the speaker had designed for the gods.

The orator was followed by a philosopher, who earnestly looked and listened, and seemed to meditate in what region of his system he should place his new associates. He gazed at all in turn, and asked some questions, from which it was evident that he deemed each a mere abstraction, or pure expression of a principle. When he had mastered, as he believed, the difficulties connected with these transcendent natures, he considered for some time, and then proceeded to explain the laws of refraction and reflection, by which the wondrous light that surrounded him might be accounted for. He enumerated what he supposed were the chemical ingredients of the nectar, assigned its musical character and name to the voice of each of the deities, and analysed the relation they bore to mortals, and that in which mortals stood to them. He was transferred to a blank nook of the universe, where he might study all orders of existence, himself unconnected with any.

Hermes in despair then set a lovely child upon the throne, whom he had conveyed from a valley where she was gathering flowers. The first drop

of the immortal liquor which passed her lips destroyed her life; and the messenger was commanded no longer to punish men by bringing them among the deities.

But suddenly the eagle spread its wings and flew to earth, and perched upon a rock which overhung the sea. To the distant mariner the light that surrounded its beak and talons appeared a watch-fire or a meteor. The rock was beside the mouth of a deep cave, in which a poet was musing, modulating his vast melodies to the sound of winds and sea, and revolving his orbed thoughts.

The poet looked upon the bird, and knew that it belonged to a kingdom whereof he was himself a rightful inhabitant. He laid his garland upon its head; his limbs quivered with a sudden lightness; and side by side they rose into the furthest skies. He placed himself upon the vacant throne as upon his natural seat; and the gods recognised in him the mortal who was worthy of celestial converse. He gazed with delighted but undazzled eyes on the forms of beauty and of power: for the art, which in him was impulse and intuition, made him comprehend and feel wherein was the glory, and what the sanctity of those superhuman beings, to whom he knew himself the destined equal.

THE CRYSTAL PRISON.

From the Novel of Arthur Coningsby.

THERE was a Tartar Khan, one of whose favourite retainers, a young man of great beauty, fled in disguise from his service, rather than marry an ill-featured woman; and left behind him the distich,

> Beauty ought no more to unite with ugliness,
> Than the bird of Paradise with the night-owl.

He was pursued and overtaken; and the Khan determined to inflict upon him the severest punishment. For this purpose, by the advice of a dervish, he caused a chamber to be constructed, the walls, roof, and floor of which were mirrors of thick crystal; and the only light admitted came through openings concealed from the view of any one within. At night an artificial radiance, the source of which was concealed, illuminated the dungeon.

Here the prisoner was confined. Wherever he turned his eyes, he could see nothing but his own image. Around, above, below, everything was still the same agonizing self. He sometimes thought he would dare and stand the sight, and fixed his gaze on some one point, which presented the reflection of his unmoving

countenance. Gradually he saw the features shrink, the glance waver; and he closed his eyelids, and shut out the stare of the remorseless avenger. But, as if he had been in the presence of a spectre, another moment forced him to look upon the image again. He shuddered at the terrible reality of the shadow; and, while his eyes wandered away, ravening for a resting-place, but despairing to find one, they encountered on all sides a thousand repetitions of their former misery.

In his sleep he at first gained some instants of repose. But gradually the face which he dreaded grew more and more distinct in his dreams, and multiplied to a sea. He woke with a scream, to find them glaring in myriads around him; or, if he riveted his look on one of the shapes, there was his own affrighted, self-petrifying visage, in all its steady outward truth. What would he not have given to be wrapt in darkness! How much more precious to him than the cup of water to the traveller in a desert, would have been a single spot of blankness, which he might have looked at and seen nothing! For him all the universe was concentrated into one tormenting form, and that his own. The most momentary look of commencing quiet, the faintest shiver of horror, every change of line or hue, all was flung back upon his heart from those encircling hell-walls. He tore his

countenance with his hands to efface the hated lineaments; and still he was pursued by his own bloody and writhing features. Like light augmented into a blaze by innumerable reflectors, his agony was returned to him a million-fold; and its last result was madness and blindness.

THE SONS OF IRON.

From the Novel of Arthur Coningsby.

IN a valley surrounded by impassable mountains of coal and iron-ore, lived a race of whom no notice has ever reached mankind, but in vague and uncertain tradition. They were iron men. Formed of that strong material, of large stature, and beautiful proportions, they had a strange and puzzling resemblance to the children of Adam, but were far superior to them in honesty and understanding, as well as in force and agility.

This stern and upright people called themselves Siderians; their patriarch was named Chalybs. From him they received what instruction they possessed, and what simple rules were necessary for their government. He said, that of his own origin he knew only this: he had a dim impression that he owed his existence to two venerable powers, called Siderus and Sterope, and that they had communicated to him, in the dawn of his consciousness, the laws that were to guide his race. Of these the most important were two; that they should always labour to increase the number of Siderians, and that they should never attempt to penetrate into the edifice in the centre

of the valley, as their destruction would be the inevitable consequence.

This building was a tower of polished steel, without windows or any opening but a door, beside which hung an iron key, apparently designed to fit the key-hole. The injunction however of Chalybs had always prevented any attempt to apply it to the lock; and the tower remained unopened. Near it, and so disposed as to form a large circle, when regarded in connexion with the tower, several tall rough blocks of iron-stone rose from the ground, and wore an air of desolate and awful antiquity. At the other extremity of the diameter from the forbidden edifice, was a mass of more regular shape than the rest, presenting the dim resemblance of an old and gigantic man, seated on a rock, with mouldering arms and implements of vast size scattered on its base. In this the inhabitants of the valley had learnt to trace the sacred image of their unknown parent, Siderus.

Chalybs remembered that, on the first day of his existence, the mountain-basin was filled with tempest, through which the lightning streamed in torrents. He found himself, when he awoke, in a cavern, on the face of a cliff. As he moved his limbs and looked around, the air became clear and quiet; the lightning ceased to flash; and he arose and explored his dominions. These exhibited only an irregular plain of metalliferous soil, with

a lake of molten iron, for ever bubbling and heaving, near the tower. The prospect was closed in on all sides by the mountains of ore and of inflammable mineral. At the foot of one of the hills, a bed of coal was burning, and supplied the first Siderian with the fire requisite for his future labours. Pursuing the instinct of his nature, he wrought and smelted a portion of his native metal; and, gradually improving his tools, he was able in a few months to begin the construction of another being, framed on the model of himself. This was an arduous undertaking; for, to say nothing of the various joints and members, the mechanism of the heart and lungs consisted of fine springs, chains, and wheels, much like those inside of a watch,—minute net-work, hammers, pivots, bells, and balances. Yet, at the close of a year from his own birth, the second iron man was finished, case-hardened, and polished like glass. Again the storm collected on the mountain-pinnacles; rain fell fast, and hissed in the lake; and lightning filled the air, and streamed and flew over the ground. The vivid flame gathered round the inanimate shape, the workmanship of Chalybs; and, when the tempest cleared away, it rose and moved and spoke, the living type of its parent.

Chalybs, and the adult infant, Ferragus, now worked together; and there was double the smelting, hammering, and filing, that went on before in the valley. The elder of the iron

artisans was improved in skill and boldness; and at the end of a twelvemonth four new Siderians were prepared for the animating influence of the electric fire.

From this time the iron population increased in geometrical progression. They were all nearly alike, but with some differences, owing to slight varieties in the quality of the material, and to the fancy of the artisans. In a fit of laziness, hoping to save the labour of the smithy, some of the younger members of the tribe made moulds, and, in different pieces, cast the shapes that they designed to prepare for the stormy anniversary of their race. But some of these figures fell to bits and perished, when the lightning reached them; and the others became such awkward, stupid, inactive beings, that their framers pushed them into the molten lake, where they were fused down to their original condition.

For a considerable period these acts of infanticide were the only important error that any Siderian was guilty of. They were as happy as they were virtuous; and the only subject that gave them uneasiness, was the difficulty of keeping themselves bright and free from rust. The air indeed of their country was remarkably pure and dry; but no iron would retain a perfect polish, except the tower, which was unaffected by dimness or decay. By the use of the file and of emery however, they contrived for the most

part to preserve themselves in their first brilliancy; and before many years they discovered, in the course of their mining, a quantity of rot-stone, which ever after rendered them the greatest assistance.

They grew proud of their continued splendour, and augmenting numbers; and the old simplicity of the Siderians was evidently corrupted. They raised magnificent palaces of shining metal, and even employed their skill in forming arms, toys, and ornaments, of a beauty never found in any other fabrics. They began to talk of constructing a ladder, by which they might reach the summits of the mountains, and conquer whatever regions lay beyond. They were also more and more irritated by the restriction which withheld them from entering the tower. But the advice of Chalybs was more strongly than ever opposed to so rash an undertaking.

At last his descendants began to suspect that he was himself guilty of the crime from which he warned them. They watched him, and discovered that, in secret and lonely hours, he approached the tower, took the key from the hook that supported it, and, having unlocked the door, entered the structure, and remained within it for several hours.

They now broke into open mutiny, said that iron and steel could no longer bear such tyranny and deceit, and insisted on knowing what was concealed within the turret.

The venerable Chalybs addressed them as follows: "I fear, my children, the hour so long foretold is now come, and that, through my folly and weakness, the race of Siderians is doomed to perish. It is now long since I began to feel that I was no longer the Chalybs I had been of old. My hair was already turning to an iron-grey. It cost me much more trouble than formerly to keep myself from growing rusty; and rust, the enemy of our line, had even, I believe, invaded my vitals. I was in want of some amusement, some consolation; and I could not withdraw my thoughts from the secret hidden in yonder tower. I hoped that my guilt would not be injurious to you; and I crossed the interdicted threshold. I found within; but why should I describe to you what you yourselves shall see?"

He left the assembly, and soon returned, accompanied by a beautiful daughter of that race of clay, which possessed the world beyond the iron valley. On her breast she held an infant; and in its aspect something of the noble Siderian character was mingled with the weakness and softness of its mother.

"From her," said Chalybs, "who is the delight of my life, I learn that the space beyond our native region is peopled by beings like herself. The passage to those wide territories lies through the tower. But remember, my children, that, if you attempt to make use of it, and to pass beyond

these mountains, we shall surely perish from the earth."

The iron men, maddened by admiration of the consort of Chalybs, and unchecked by his counsels, rushed to the open turret; whence, passing down an iron stair, and through a long tunnel, the formidable battalion emerged into the dominions of fleshly humanity. They soon provided themselves with brides, and became the early princes of the world.

From their race, mingling with ours, have arisen those potent champions, who, in various ages, have overrun and amazed the earth. From the bodies of the first invaders was derived the invention of armour. They were the smiths who introduced the practice of shoeing horses with metal. The fountains at which they drank, have ever since been called chalybeate, and have preserved a taste of iron. The weapons that they brought with them from their original abode, being discovered in different ages and remote countries, have won the astonishment of mankind for their unequalled size and temper; and a sword, wielded by one of these massive chiefs, became in after ages the national idol of the Scythians.

But the manufacture of iron men has ceased. Chalybs alone clung to his native habitations; and his bride remained with him. He died many years after the dispersion of his tribe; and his

semi-human descendants committed his corpse to the lake of its kindred metal. They too then left the valley; and the heavy trap-door closed behind them over the turret-stair. The image of Siderus is said to have rusted, before their departure, into a mass as shapeless as those in its neighbourhood. But, even when many ages had past, the tradition was remembered by the tribes on the other side of the mountains. When after rain the sun shone brightly on the airy precipices, they fancied that the glitter proceeded from one of the iron men, still lingering among the crags of that rocky barrier.

THE PALACE OF MORGANA.

From Blackwood's Magazine for 1837.

THE palace of Morgana was vast and beautiful, with many halls and galleries of marble, jet, crystal, and lapis lazuli. Cornices of gay colours, mosaic pavements, continuous paintings of the most fanciful arabesques appeared on all sides; and through the florid windows, which in that climate needed no glass to close them, was seen the prospect of the large and lovely gardens. These were full of ancient trees, green turf, and beds of red flowers, and were divided by marble terraces from the wooded walks around. Many bright fountains played their diamond arches against the sun. All the birds of fairy-land flitted across the avenues, or rested in the foliage. Beautiful statues, and pieces of fantastic sculpture were placed here and there in those pleasant grounds, or grew like alabaster lilies from unknown seeds beneath. In sight of these fair things, many colonnades and domes rose amid the masses of foliage, for the assembling or repose of the happy inhabitants.

There, at a certain season, which grave historians have generally omitted to speak of, were a

party of young men and damsels. They spent their time in singing to each other, in gathering and braiding flowers, in sports and dancing, or in enjoying their light and gay repast beneath the shade. Their life was fit for spring-time, full of courtesy and honour; and all evil was as far from the thought of those youths and ladies, as was the appearance of aught foul or unpleasing from their abode. Some of them were generally together; of these, no doubt, one clung to another more than to the rest; and there might be seen the soft sweet feelings of mutual love creeping into many hearts. Others were content to pass the hours more carelessly, conversing with all, or alternately with different persons, and taking almost as much pleasure from observing the signs of affection in those around them, as those whom they laughed at found in their own feelings. Among those whose regards and gentleness extended to all, and did not fix on any one in particular, was the young and beautiful Lady Viola. Sometimes, when a band of her friends were sitting in the dreamy noontide shadow, or wandering slowly under the twilight, she would spring among them out of a thicket with her wild and airy dance, like a wind-tossed moonbeam, scatter among them a handful of orange-flowers, and then start off again, too lightly for any foot to follow; and from some tangled depth of leaves, on the height of a rock covered with ash-boughs, her

voice would be heard in free and solitary song. She was witty, and merry, and courteous; and her words and her capricious presence were pleasanter to all, than the beauty of any of her companions. But she gave equal looks to man and woman. Many hearts were entangled in the meshes of her brown hair; but on none had she ever bestowed a lock of it.

Among the noble and generous youths assembled in Morgana's palace, was one less cheerful than the rest, whom the others therefore sometimes called the Solitary; sometimes, from his powers of song, the Minstrel; and sometimes again, from the strange tales he told, and the feats he was said to have performed, the Magician. He often wandered in the woods, while the rest were sporting in the colonnades of the palace, or gathering fair nosegays in the gardens. And while they sat around a fountain, delighting themselves with song and jest and tale, he would be seen for a few moments crossing some dark avenue, and apparently lost in thought. Viola was the lady whom he chiefly sought to converse with. But her replies to him were generally light and mocking; and seldom would she remain near him, or indeed near any one, for more than an instant. Once only it was noticed that at night, when the stars were shining with peculiar beauty, and the lordly planet Jupiter seemed to rule the sky, her voice was heard in long-con-

tinued and exulting song from the summit of a wooded cliff: and, when it ceased, a pipe, known as the Magician's, answered faintly from the dark river-bed below, and, after sounding a few notes, appeared to re-awaken Viola's melody.

One afternoon the whole party were assembled under a huge horse-chesnut, covered with fan-like leaves and spring flowers. Near them was a large and finely-shaped vase of Alabaster, adorned with exquisite sculpture of Nymphs and Bacchanals. The Lady Viola was peculiarly fond of it, and took care to crown it daily with the sweetest and brightest flowers. The different parties moved towards the vase from many sides of the garden, gliding over the soft turf and the smooth marble of the terraces, with their various garments glancing brightly under the evening sun through the openings of the thick foliage. Viola came bearing in her hand some mountain heath which she had newly culled, and which she now added to the garland of the vase. The others gathered round her; and one said, while looking at the sculptured figures, "I wish I could make them move and dance."

"Such things have been done," said another.

"I wonder," exclaimed a third, "could our friend the Magician accomplish such a feat?"

"Oh!" cried several voices, "I wish he were here; I would try."

"I wish he were!" said Viola, in a low voice;

and immediately the leaves of the neighbouring thicket rustled, and the Magician stood before them.

He seemed not thirty years of age. His purple dress was laced with gold; a crimson cloak hung from his shoulders; his high forehead and large black eyes were shaded by a broad cap of the same colour, from under which his long raven hair fell over his shoulders, and gave him a wizard look, at which it might almost have been fancied, from the expression of his face, that he himself was quietly smiling. He held in his hand a pipe of ivory, wrought in imitation of a reed; and from it he was accustomed to draw such sounds, as enchanted and filled with sad delight the guests of the invisible Morgana.

"You wished me here?" he said to Viola.

"Oh!" she replied, "you must have quick ears. I thought you were at the other end of the garden."

"Your wish," he said, "expressed in a fainter whisper, would have brought me from the other end of the earth."

While they spoke thus, most of those near them sat down on the grass, or on the carved and mossy-cushioned benches; and he said to Viola,— "But will you not sit, while I lie at your feet, and hear your commands?"

She was in an unusually compliant mood; for she sat down at his desire. He placed himself as

he had proposed, and addressed her again: "Now, lady, how can I pleasure you?".

"Thus," she said; "we were all wishing you here, to make the figures on this Vase move, as if endowed with life?"

"Is that all? I could teach a child to do that."

He placed his instrument to his lips, and began to play a tune which none of them had ever heard before. It soon grew louder; and at each return of the strain some faster and wilder movement was added to it. All eyes were fixed on the Vase, till, from the very intentness of their looks, and the strong thrilling of the music, which they felt as if it shook the earth, they hardly knew whether the marble remained immovable, or whether they themselves were not whirled around it. But after some minutes all were satisfied that the figures actually glided on; the Nymphs and Satyrs wove their arms together in the dance, and shook their thyrsuses and garlands; and while the music sank, so as to be almost inaudible, the shapes completed their circle, and were restored to their former places and attitudes.

"Wondrous!" said all present; "he is indeed a magician."

"This," he replied, "is little. It is but to have learned an old forgotten tune, which men of late years seem to have thought too good for them, and so have left it to the invisible powers."

Viola said nothing; but he ventured to look at her; and the slight softening of the eye, and the faint flush upon her cheek, overpaid him for a thousand incantations. Soon she exclaimed laughingly, "If this be so little, could you not show us some achievement of your art, which you consider really worthy of you?"

"Willingly," replied he, and drew a single peculiar note from his instrument. He then begged her to touch the ground beside him with a sprig of flowered myrtle which she held in her hand. At the sign a fountain rose from the earth, and formed a crystal dome above the Magician, dividing him from Viola. Through its dazzling colours and swift motion his form could not be distinguished. Suddenly it sank again; and he had vanished. Not a trace of him remained; and the water had left no token behind, but a few drops of dew upon the myrtle-spray, which, after a moment's pause of astonishment, Viola kissed off, and then laid the graceful branch in her bosom.

After this moment the music of the pipe was again heard from the neighbouring trees; the strain was now more broken and quicker. A brilliant humming-bird shot from the forest, and hovered above the flowers of the Vase. None knew what to expect; but after several minutes all started and grasped at those beside them. The Vase itself was now changing its form.

Amid the flowers appeared a human face: roses, red and white, bloomed on the cheeks; the lips were like a blown carnation; the rich brown hair hung in clusters on the neck, and was crowned with flowers; the alabaster sculpture itself disappeared; and the form expanded, and became that of a figure suitable to the lovely head. The vision appeared to move very gently to the sound of the music, and to be so slight that it might have risen into the air upon the evening breeze. Suddenly one of the ladies exclaimed, "It is Viola!" and Viola herself rose in amazement from the turf, and confronted her image. They were exactly similar, except that, when the setting sun shone on the neck and shoulder of the phantom, some of the spectators thought the flesh was slightly transparent.

Viola was determined not to be daunted by the effort of power, to which she had challenged the Magician, and looked at the figure and smiled. The blooming face smiled too, and bent slightly towards her; and the lady could hardly refrain from murmuring, while she beheld the copy of herself, "How exquisite! How lovely!" With a swift impulse she stepped forward to touch the face with hers. The music made a loud and vehement turn; and, though to the bystanders it seemed that Viola kissed the mouth of Viola, the lips and face that were present to the eye and feeling of the maiden, became at the instant those

of the Magician. She trembled and shrank back. The music from the thicket changed its tune and character, and became more irregular and plaintive. The magic form lost its animation; the flowers and the alabaster returned; and the Nymph and her thyrsus were fixed again in sculptured beauty.

Viola stepped close to the Vase, and leant her brow among the flowers on the brim, apparently sunk in reflection. The others expressed their wonder in hasty words and broken sentences; and, when they could turn and look quietly round, the Magician was again in their circle. Viola raised her head with a thoughtful smile, still resting her hand upon the Vase, and thanked him for his labour.

"But," said one of the party to him, "could you reverse the charm, and turn Viola into a vase?"

"That also I would endeavour to do, if I had her permission."

"You have it," she answered, "provided you will not leave me in that shape, beautiful as it is; for I am more accustomed to my own."

"No," he said, "if I may but approach the vase and touch it, I can answer for again accomplishing your transformation."

She nodded her assent cheerfully; and again he touched his instrument. He stood before her, and fixed his deep dark eyes on hers, which hardly sustained the look. To the thought of those around, the forms of both expanded and

grew half luminous in the twilight. The music which he now produced, though not loud, was so keen and melting, that it passed through the very hearts and brains and limbs of all, and trembled in every fibre of their fingers. It swelled and complicated its volume, and seemed to grow upward from the pipe, and spin around like a huge pillar between earth and sky. And now it was heard to come, not merely from the instrument, but from the hands and head and whole figure of the player; and every hair of his long black locks gave forth a stream of melody. Viola was rooted to the ground, but shook and wavered like a tree in a strong wind. In a few seconds the breathing glowing maiden sank into a flower-crowned vase, as graceful and noble as the other, which it completely resembled. The Magician seemed exhausted by his efforts, and fell softly on the grass with his pipe beside him. One of Viola's friends whispered to her companions, "Now were it a jest to prevent him from approaching, and thus retain her for a time as she is."

All assented; and, forming a ring between the Magician and the transformed damsel, they danced laughing around, so as to make it impossible for him to approach. He gazed at them a moment, rose, and took water in his hand from a fountain near him, and scattered it over them. Instantly they sank in sleep on the green turf

and the last dim ray of sunset fell on their repose. He then began to whisper music on his pipe, rather than to play it, drew near gently to the vase, and, gathering a sprig of myrtle from the garland, placed it next his heart. The lady swiftly emerged from her enchantment, and stood beside him in the clear night.

"Viola, can you forgive me?"

"For what transgression?" she enquired. "I have been but for a few moments in a dream."

"Was it a happy one?" said the Magician.

She cast down her eyes; and it was a moment before she replied; "Not painful. But what is your offence?"

"Have you not lost your myrtle?"

She felt for it, and blushed to find it missing. "Was it for this that you said it was necessary you should approach me, in order to restore me to my present form?"

He coloured, smiled, and said, "You have guessed well. But you have not yet granted me pardon."

She held out her hand; he pressed it to his lips; and she questioned him anew. "Tell me why you selected me for the object of your art, instead of calling some of your legion of phantoms out of nothing?"

"Have you," he replied, "no feeling in your heart, which makes you of greater importance to me than the fairest spirit that ever shot from

a star to earth?" He paused for an instant; and, as she made no answer, he continued: "I could indeed have called a multitude of beings out of air, all exquisite, all different; but I could not have given any of them a human heart to love me; and you are the first I have found whom I could love, and having in yourself an answering affection."

"Will you not release our friends?" asked Viola.

"They will wake," said he, "at the rising of the moon."

When the moon rose they awoke; but Viola and the Magician had departed from the Palace of Morgana. Their friends found lingering in their ears the fragments of a chant, which they imagined they must have heard during their sleep, and of which this was the purport:

Into the world of life away!
  Away from the valley of pleasant dreams!
Through change and sorrow we now shall stray,
  Where time no longer a sun-flash seems.

Away from the garden of flowery joys,
  Where nothing was ended, and all began;
From a land where spades and swords were toys,
  And nought was real enough for man.

We shall struggle, and toil, and mourn;
  Our sky will often be dark above:
But within us the flame of song shall burn;
  And still it will be our bliss to love.

THE SUIT OF ARMOUR AND THE SKELETON.

From Blackwood's Magazine for 1838.

Armour.

AT last it is night, still night! The crowd, who thronged the church during the day, and gazed at me as a toy for their idleness, are gone; and I am alone. Ah! I cannot weep; but it is a comfort to sigh, to speak. There are none to hear. The princely warriors who fought around me, are all with him who wore me, dead,—perished, with the eyes that were wont to admire me; and I am alone in the world. Ah!

Skeleton.

Is it from yonder rusty armour that the voice comes? If so, I pray thee tell me how it befalls that thou hast the power of speech?

Arm. I know not what thou art that askest; but I will answer thee. The magic of the gnomes, whom he that framed me called to his aid, gave me this mournful privilege. On this one night during the year I wake to consciousness and speech; and now my hour is come. But do thou in turn tell me what thou art.

Skel. I am the skeleton in the niche over

against thee. This is the eve of the festival of St. John, to whose honour I, or rather he that animated me, was especially devoted; and it is my destiny, for the years that must pass before I can entirely rest, to tingle on this one night with life, and listen, and speak. Wilt thou inform me what are the sorrows which thou so sorely bewailest?

Arm. Nay, tell me first, how it comes to pass that now for the first time I hear thee, though I have held my present place for fifty years?

Skel. I have been transferred hither but a few days since, as the precious relics of a saint, and, clad in a monastic garb, am fixed in a shrine close to that marble tomb over which thou so grimly standest. Many miracles, of which I know nothing, are said to have attended my removal hither; for men, till they learn to wonder at and love truth, will exercise themselves in wondering at falsehood and loving it.

Arm. Thou art then, after all, but the skeleton of some poor devout peasant. I am the armour of a Duke, and converse not on equal terms with such as thee.

Skel. Despise not what thou hast not well understood and seen through; a precept which I suspect would much lessen the range of thy contempt. On equal terms indeed we converse not; for I was once alive; and thou,—what art thou? a mass of steel and gold, framed for

another's use, and in thyself but some few jots better than nothing.

Arm. I had power by my aspect, to daunt many hearts in bosoms such as thine, and to protect one with which thou durst not have claimed kindred.

Skel. Where is that one now?

Arm. To thy thought it may be only dust. But it lives for ever in story, as the heart of a wise, brave, and courteous knight and ruler.

Skel. It lives in story? Ay, so do the miracles they say I wrought on being removed hither.

Arm. Churl! Be gone, or be silent! Thou knowest well that thy proper place, whence thou hast been so ignorantly lifted, is many a lance's length from me.

Skel. Friend, be not wrath. Thy place would perhaps be, perhaps will be, a blacksmith's forge, where thou wilt be hammered into sickles for reapers, and shoes for pack-horses.

Arm. Peace, scoffer! I will not answer thy base ribaldry. And yet, peasant that thou art, thou speakest but as thou must needs think. I will discourse with thee on other matters; for so seldom comes the gift of speech, even to me, noble and time-honoured as I am, that it must not be suppressed; and there is none but thou to hear. Strange destiny! I that have blazed in the courts of kings, and been the morning-star of battles, am now lonely, empty, dimmed

with dust, and must sigh over all that has been, and all that is, and be heard only by a thing like this. O royal days of courtesy and valour! O fervid life of enterprise and joy! how are ye buried under the slabs and tombs, and the clay of battle-fields; and I alone remain, to waste and sadden in a withered and dead world.

Skel. Dost thou then think, because thou art laid aside as a vain memorial, that all things else are rusted and abandoned? that the stars are clogged and ceasing in their courses, and the earth drying up and failing, because thy joints move no more, and thy vainer idea has waned into a shred? Dost thou fancy that mankind are now lifeless images fixed to a wall, or that all succeeding generations must pine and perish on the tomb of thy former wearer?

Arm. I will not answer thy ill-advised question, but in turn will enquire of thee: Dost thou not perceive what melancholy aspects of decay fill this old and stately building,—how sadly, through these pale-faced, richly-vested shadows in the coloured windows, the moon-beams glance,—how dark and spectral these vaults of the roof above,—with how many epitaphs of death and weary knees of penitents that pavement is worn away,—how these pillars and buttresses stand like over-tired penal giants? The bells seem meant to utter nothing but a

knell; and, when they ring more cheerfully, it is a mad helpless merriment. The voices of the priests sound like a witch's croak over her wretched sorcery. The people, who frequent these aisles and chapels, look and move as if they were a train of spectres trying to persuade themselves that in their religious offices is a respite for their doom in truth long since accomplished. The world which I see and hear of, is all a tomb full of dust and darkness; and what passes for life is but the nightmare-dream ruling over the endless sleep of death.

Skel. Thee, my friend, a nightmare must possess; else couldst thou not be thus deluded. Thy hour indeed of dignity and pomp has passed away, as the hour will doubtless pass of the hills and rocks, nay, even of the stars. These, like thee, will pass into new forms of being; but whatever is worth preserving, will assuredly remain and be immortal. Nothing that we know of is outwardly indestructible; but nothing is destitute of some principle within it that cannot perish. All no doubt, that has been thrust out of its place into some unsuitable elevation, will hereafter sink, while all that has been unduly depressed will rise. But to waste words in lamenting over this righteous law, becomes only,—excuse my abruptness,—an empty head, or emptier iron head-piece.

Arm. Poor heap of dryness and desolation!

In thy hollow bones and heartless ribs what life plays? Indeed I am void and aimless; but I know myself and my own misery. I am like all of fairest and best that is. I have been visited and filled and lifted up for a season, by a power that seemed to be great and lasting. It has passed away, and left me a relic of what once I was, or was imagined to be. So is it with all things. All are but wrecks and memorials of delusions, that once were bright, and now have vanished. Mythologies, and the sweet dreams of poets, and the flushing fancies of youthful hearts, heroic histories, and devout religions, all play their summer meteors across the sky for a moment, and then leave a deeper than the first blackness. So too the clouds that catch a rosy morning tinge, float away into mist and storm, and bequeathe to the vapours of a new day the gaudy task of cheating men's eyes with new images of worthless beauty. The mountains, above which they hover, seem to stand fast, but are for ever wearing down into the clay and ruins, which their torrents carry to the sea. Cities and kingdoms are built up like rainbows, so to vanish; and the old oak, beneath which laws have been made and treaties sworn for centuries, is blown down and used for firewood, to burn the statutes and leagues which it seemed to consecrate. Say no more. He who has seen the hard haggard old man stand

between his own grave and the cradle of his grandchild, and watch the stormy wrinkles grow wet with tears at the thought of all the infant will first believe in and then unlearn,—he knows enough of existence. After all thy years, only folly such as thine could dream of aught other than despair.

Skel. The old man weeps, because he no longer enjoys his hopes as formerly, not because he no longer possesses them. That he can mourn over their faded colouring, obscure perhaps only to obscure eyes, shows how clear their forms and undying lineaments still are to his heart. Were it otherwise, were his existence devoid of all hope, he would not weep: he would sink down at once into a heap of clay, not such as the sexton buries, which still bears witness of what it has enfolded, but such as that which he turns up with his shovel, and again with his shovel replaces. When that hour of burial comes, hymns and prayers and reverential thoughts and looks attest how solemn and precious to man, how far from empty and insignificant, is all that has ever borne the aspect of a man, and been called by a man's name. Men deal with mere lies as what they are, and cast away to rot their worn-out gloves and tattered masks and cowls. But because they know their lives are not lies, not insane fancies, or mere slimy bubbles, they treat with holy regard and piety whatever their

lives have animated, even though it be a hideous corpse.

Arm. Speak as thou wilt out of thy school-primer, even thou wilt hardly say, that, amid these aisles and tombs and priestly mummeries, thy existence is serene and joyous. What then must mine be? For I have always, brooding in my hollow darkness, the remembrance of what I once was, and of all that then surrounded me. Whatever has been beautiful and majestic on earth, appears to me a train, such as I once headed, of princely panoplies, with plumes mighty as the wings of eagles, and banners fit to gather and impassion kingdoms. Taller and stronger and far fairer than the crowd of men, whom they sway and dazzle, they move over the ground in morning light to the measures of trumpet-music; and earth sounds proudlier at their tread. Heroes, kings, and gods,—valour, courtesy, wisdom, eloquence, what are they all but mailed and radiant images, that march over the world and pass away into darkness? Mankind indeed remain; but they are a heap of strewn and withered leaves, torn from the stately branches on which they once grew. Even now, methinks, could I open to thee a way below these charnel-vaults, we might at last emerge into a rocky plain, lighted only by the clear moon, and behold, seated on their marble chairs, the gold and steel and bronze figures, gigantic, silent, awful

with severe immortal pride, and exempt from pain or decay. But alas! if, as I would fain believe, these anywhere exist, it is in a world apart and of their own. They have been seen for some scanty hours by a race too mean for them, have founded kingdoms, freed or conquered nations, — as momentary sunbright apparitions have turned battles, or quelled the fears of wavering councils by one pealing utterance of disdain. But they are gone for ever. This earth could not detain them; for it was not worthy of them; and now nothing remains but to groan, and, when groans are spent, be silent.

Skel. Thou at least seemest to find a better use for thy iron lips than merely groaning. Thy words sound as if thou hadst a pleasure in being listened to, which thy vanity, aping pride, leads thee to disclaim. But be it so. I am well pleased that thou art more humane and kindly than thou pretendest; and I can forgive the boyish folly of thy affected haughty indifference.

Arm. Were I not nailed here, like Prometheus to his rock, I would soon avenge thy insults.

Skel. Wert thou not nailed there, like a kite on a barn-door, thou wouldst not have been rhapsodizing thy sickly fancies for the last half-hour. Nor in that case should I have been thinking what insane mouthing quackeries one may persuade oneself, and fancy one persuades others, are the strains of a peculiar and supreme wisdom.

Permit me therefore to observe, that all you have been saying is, as might have been expected, mere worthless absurdity, a thumping together of fine words, in hopes that some of them may stick to each other, and fit, and so turn out intelligible. The amount of meaning is about equal to that of thread in the hastily stitched tawdry patchwork of a masquerade dress, and barely serves the same purpose of seeming to hold together the ill-assorted scraps and glaring colours. Yet a thread of meaning there is; and on this let me hang some words of answer. Do you in truth fancy that the life of the human race, of which one slight impulse is now strangely lingering in your frame and mind, exists only to produce some few enormous glittering shapes of strength and subtlety? Or are not men, even the meanest and most wretched, could we look into them, and read their whole story and destination, all the true-born children of the infinite One, and each, more or less, a conscious image of the great whole, and of Him whom it visibly reflects? Who dares say that life is given to spend itself in those blazing bursts, and amid those stormy quivering peaks, which alone thou pretendest to honour? In the millions of dark huts, and among the countless daily sordid cares of all generations, Heaven works unseen beneath, and bends above; and man is in himself greater than all the outward liveries in which he can clothe his lot. Often, how often! he makes him-

self little, in striving to be falsely great. He lays waste the garden, in which he might live a free demigod, and shovels and piles the soil into a tomb-like pyramid, to stand on its narrow peak alone, an imprisoned, idle, ape-like dwarf. And what is true of man, is true of all things and powers. In its right place, and for its true purpose, everything is good, precious, holy. Only let all lies be boldly unsaid, and faithfully suffered for,—all perversions, even at the cost of much writhing, be patiently turned inside out, and so restored to their true state. Courage, friend, courage! After sufficient wasting and hammering, thou thyself mayst come at last to be an honest serviceable ploughshare.

Arm. Rather, ten thousand times rather, would I sink into utter nothingness.

Skel. Pshaw! I have an ear for music and rational discourse, but none for the clang and clatter of old iron, unless indeed it helped to make the bees swarm. The sense too of a simmering-pot, or of the sound of an axe, I can understand. But when I see anything that strives to be more than it can be, I know there is something that will soon become less than it is. We may however know more of each other, and of the truth in these matters, if thou wilt tell me some chief passages from the history of him whose tomb thou adornest.

Arm. That will I do right willingly; and so

shalt thou see and own how vain and ill-considered thy scoffs have been. Duke Eberhard, whose effigy lies below me carved in stone, with an eagle on his helmet, and a bear at his feet, was the lord of five great castles; and three hundred knights followed him to battle. Never pilgrim passed his gates, without receiving a meal of venison, and a draught of wine from a golden cup. Never minstrel sang in his hall, and wanted the guerdon of four golden pieces, and a mantle edged with fur. The burghers of twelve towns did homage to him; and from each town he yearly received twelve casks of wine and a golden chain. The man was bold who dared do aught but bless Duke Eberhard within three long days' ride of the borders of his land. Noble horses of Flanders, brave armours from Italy, keen dogs, fair hawks, many a sweet-voiced minstrel, and a storming train of riders were gathered daily round the Duke; and he himself was of all the stateliest sight to see. One town there was within the circuit of his domains, that ever refused to yield him homage. Its minstrels sang no songs in his honour; and its burghers rendered him neither casks of wine nor golden chains, but rather cold looks and haughty pretensions, talking of I know not what old privileges and claims to freedom. Nay, when, to do them honour, arrayed in steel, and followed by fifty knights and all their squires and pages, he approached their walls to brighten their high feast

with his presence, they closed the gates against him. A crack-voiced harper on a tower drawled a scurvy ballad in mockery, as the Duke in high wrath turned bridle, and, biting his lip, and shaking his plumed head, rode back ten leagues from the gates of Rothburg to his castle of Falkesheim. Now thou must know that the Duke of Bavaria's daughter had chosen Eberhard for her champion when he jousted at Augsburg; and she was the fairest woman, save one peasant girl, I ever looked upon. But she would not give him any token of her favour to wear, till he should be able to show it on entering the gates of that rebellious town. Judge then of my noble master's rightful anger, when these base burghers opposed his sovereign will, and darkened the smiles of so admirable a lady. Not long could their insolence avail. He sent squires, pilgrims, minstrels, merchants of his followers into the city, with store of gold and jewels. More than one rosy-cheeked and bright-eyed damsel of France and Italy were found to do his bidding, and win the younger burghers to his will. The chief of all these sullen citizens was an old, hard-browed, stiff-necked man, to whom wealth and pleasure were as dew-drops on a rock. Him five knights lay in wait for near the walls. They sent to tell him that a palmer, who brought news of his only son from beyond the seas, was under a vow not to enter any town, and waited for him at the

edge of the forest. The lure succeeded; and ere morning he was hanging, forty feet high, on a pine-tree before the drawbridge of Falkesheim. Courage and policy and a liberal hand soon taught the citizens in whose power lay true honour and lasting safety; and a solemn deputation came to the castle to entreat my Lord that of his great goodness he would receive the fealty of his poor servants. He was pleased to be entreated, and smiled on them graciously, nothing reproaching them with their former manifold arrogances. On the third day after, the Duke, clad in the complete mail that now hangs over his tomb, and wearing on his arm the scarf of the Lady Matilda of Bavaria, entered, at the head of his retainers, the gate from which he had been driven with shame but eight months before. The train of Barons and Knights that followed him would have befitted the Emperor; and of the armours which flashed affright that day into the eyes of the ignorant and rascal citizens, was none so rich and perfect as that of Duke Eberhard. At the high feast which celebrated his entry, ten minstrels sang his praises from the gallery of the hall, on each of whom the town was fain to bestow great largess. The railer who had once jeered from their walls was led by them,—for so the Duke required,—before the dais, with his hands tied behind him, and was then scourged by the grooms beyond the gates, and his harp broken

and cast into the river. Of many goodly solemnities which I might recount, this one was, methinks, for a chivalrous and loyal spirit, the sweetest and most joyous. Every nobly born guest was gay and festal; and it added to the pleasure of all to see the sad and writhing looks of the cowed citizens. Canst thou wonder that, when I think of these things, and of him who now lies in dust below, I say the world has but sparkled up for some rare moments into a generous flame, and is now sunk for ever into mouldering dismal darkness? O Eberhard! how little could the crowd of mortals comprehend thy mighty and indomitable soul, ever swelling to embrace a larger compass of action and glory, ever looking with a stern and just disdain on the meaner throng that pressed like emmets round thy strong gigantic footsteps!

Skel. Dost thou remember the name of the peasant girl whose beauty thou spakest of?

Arm. If I remember, she was called Agnes. But why askest thou? Didst thou know aught of her?

Skel. There was a maiden of that name, daughter to a poor labourer, his only child, and without a mother. A great Lord, on whose domains they lived, cast on her the eyes of unlawful affection, when she was still almost a child. Ere long he commanded her father to send her to his castle, that she might attend on the wife of one of his

Squires; for he was himself unmarried. It was well known what household he kept, and what mind was his towards the beautiful woman that approached his path. So her father refused the honour designed for him. Next day a man-at-arms, riding along the road close by the field where he wrought, shot at him, as if in sport, with his cross-bow, and sent the bolt through his arm. He knew that he dared no longer abide there; and at nightfall he left his cottage, and fled with his daughter into the heart of the forest, where he lived under the trees till he could build himself a hut of branches. Here they dwelt for many weeks; and the fair girl never murmured at her lot, but was peaceful and joyous to be with her father, and to do his will. Sometimes at night he returned to his former village, many leagues away, and obtained some help of food and clothing from his neighbours. On one of these occasions he was seen by some of the foresters, pursued, and led before the Lord, who commanded him to discover the retreat of his runaway vassal, his daughter. He refused, and was cast into a prison below the castle, which looked out from the rock over the plain and river, and from which he could see his native village and his former home. Here for weeks he lay without tidings of his child, and could only gaze at the dark edge of the forest in which he had left her, or look away to the deserted cottage where she had been born,

and where he had lived with her mother. He never heard the horn blown, and the tramp and clash of the hunting train, and saw them wind down the hill and cross the river to hunt in the woods, but it seemed to him that they must needs find a human prey, for which they sought not. At last his fears came true. He heard the varied cries, and the shouts, and the baying of dogs, and all the tumult of the returning chase; and soon a young girl ran faltering from amid the trees, and hurried towards the well-known cottage. A moment after, the Duke appeared on horseback with many riders around him. Guiding the pursuit, he sent them in different directions, and made straight on himself. When she reached the cottage, she found a huntsman waiting to seize her, and turned away to the river. The Duke was close behind. The captive heard the distant shriek,—"Father, I come! I come!"—and saw her leap from the cliff into the stream. That night the father was less strictly watched, and escaped from his prison. He wandered along the banks of the river, till on a little beach of sand he saw, glimmering through the dark, a white heap, which was his daughter's body. He sat upon the sand till dawn, holding the corpse in his arms, and, when light began to break, carried it into the woods, and so, alternately resting and journeying all day, he at last reached his hut, dug a grave under the fallen leaves, and there buried his child. Thenceforth he never left

the deep wood, nor heard tidings of man, till a horseman rode furiously through the thicket, and the horse stumbled and fell at the threshold of the hut. The rider was Duke Eberhard. He had been set upon when hunting in the forest by a band of his feudal enemies, and was deperately wounded. The recluse lifted him up, laid him on his own bed of leaves, and did what he could to revive him, so that, when he opened his eyes, the face that he saw bending over him was that of his former prisoner and vassal. Many were the strange and fearful words of rage and misery that the dying man uttered. He shrank and trembled, when his new attendant spoke to him; and he asked, "Wilt thou not murder me then?" It seemed from his language that the fair, pale image of Agnes had pursued him ever since her death, and frightened him forth often at midnight into the lonely forest. The phantom, he said, had driven him on to the spot where his enemies lay in wait for him; and when he was flying from them, and looked back to see if they were near, the only figure he discerned was that of the maiden running with her long hair fallen about her, as when in life she ran before him, and pointing a drawn sword at him. The childless father spoke to him of peace and pardon; but the Duke looked at him with fierce eyes, and groaning, "This from thee!" with one long breath expired. The peasant gave notice of the place

and manner of Eberhard's death; and so his own abode became known to many. He began to be regarded as a holy hermit. The country people told, after his death, of miracles wrought beside his grave; and at last his name was canonized, and his bones were transferred to this great Abbey Church. But now for thee and me this time of preternatural awakening is wellnigh over. The life in each is but a weak spark of that which glowed in Eberhard and his vassal. In each of us doubtless it lingers for some reasonable purpose, whether one day to be re-united to its ampler source, or to take new shapes, and work for other than human ends in some different region of existence. Of this much be thou sure, that life is more and worthier than its outward agitations and clamours,—the sea larger and more stable than its bubbles. There are millions of connected, concentric realities, ever revolving and unfolding themselves, which must each do its own work steadily, not dashing and exploding into the track of its neighbour. All these may, by the nobler intelligences, be studied and understood, if love, and faith, and patience be not wanting. But it is the prerogative of folly to fancy that revolt, display, noise, subjugation can be profitable for anything, and that, when these are impossible, existence stagnates. Writhing is not the truest grace, nor roaring the sweetest music of nature. The mad lightning-flash may deem

that, as it bursts and passes, the stars too vanish with it. But they survive unchanged, and smile out calmly, when the storm has raged itself away.

Arm. Would that the dust of Eberhard could awaken, and with one blast of his horn dash to pieces these gloomy vaults, and for ever silence thy foolish prate beneath the ruins!

Skel. Even thy ravings are doubtless explicable, from the idea of a higher order than mortals can measure, which includes and justifies all things. But it is plain that thou hast not yet learnt thy destination, or that of the world; and much wilt thou have to endure in attaining to that knowledge.

LAND AND SEA.

From Blackwood's Magazine for 1838.

Chapter I.

JANE MARTIN was the only daughter of a yeoman living in the village of Meadham, not far from the southern coast of England. The place was divided from the sea by a low range of hills; and the fields of pasture and of corn were surrounded by extensive woods. These, together with the small collection of cottages, and the village church, presented a prospect of tranquillity and beauty.

Jane was the heiress of a cottage and a few fields, and, without these advantages, had beauty enough to attract more than one rustic lover. But none of them could win her affections. Her mother had died early, but had left on her daughter's mind a tinge of her own imaginative character. Her father was possessed of some books, which he was fond of reading, and delighted to put in her hands. But he saw that there was mixed up in her disposition a strong portion of the irregular and fantastic strain, which the old man used to say she must have had from her mother, who always, he would add, had been a sort of fairy body,

rather than of common flesh and blood like himself. Whatever touch of superstition Jane could light on in his books of history or travels, or in the belief and stories of her neighbours, had a powerful charm for her. Dreams, and prophecies, and accounts of ghosts and visions filled her with awe. When she was about fifteen, and was taken by her father to hear the preaching of a wandering Methodist, a man of coarse but fervid eloquence, the descriptions in which he rioted, of the bodily torments of the lost, and the never-ending delights of heaven, were for her an exquisite, unimagined contrast to the calm morality and grave devotion of the parish church. The effect of this evening, —for the sermon was delivered after nightfall in a dimly-lighted barn,—was so overpowering, that she seemed for some days in a restless fever, and at last was seized with illness. She rose however from her bed apparently strong and fresh as before. Her beauty had lost nothing of its attractiveness, and had gained something in expression. But she did not look formed for happiness. The sensitive and excitable movement of her face, and the quick and striking dilation of the pupils in her large light eyes, conveyed the notion of a mind too early disturbed, and too little under the government of any settled principles of action, for the hope of usefulness and peace. But surrounded as this countenance was with pale brown hair, and supported by a figure of healthy, youthful elasti-

city, the whole picture of the girl had an affecting sweetness.

Her favourite reading was an old collection of voyages and travels, filled with records of gainful and warlike adventurers, their intercourse with foreign cities and savage tribes, crimes, sufferings, wonders, and superstitions. On these she mused at every moment which she could save from the care of her household affairs and of the dairy and garden. She knew nothing of the world, except within a circle of four or five miles around her father's house; and all beyond presented itself to her mind as made up of sparkling seas and spicy islands, gorgeous towns, and beautiful and heroic men,—ships so light and gay as might sail among the clouds, and cargoes of gold and fruits as glittering as those summer clouds themselves. But, though within seven miles of the coast, she had never seen the sea; and the wish to behold that unknown boundless miracle of nature became, when she had grown out of childhood, the strongest feeling of her mind. Her mother, she knew, was the daughter of a seaman, and had spent her unmarried life at Southport, a town and harbour some twenty miles from Meadham, where her father found his future bride. Now the long-buried mother, whose grave was in the churchyard, and met her eyes every Sunday, appeared to her in her dreams as wearing some indistinct sea-shape, as treading lightly on the waves, and

beckoning her to come to that new and delightful region. The thought was too precious to be spoken of to her father; and the girl cherished it, till she half persuaded herself that something more than fancy had shaped the image. For months she turned the wish over and over, till it grew into a project. The notion of some unaccountable good to be derived from looking on the sea,—of some magical beauty clothing the great element,—and of some mystery connected with the moment of her success in the enterprise, fastened on her imagination with no less strength than would on many minds the hope of mounting from earth to one of the heavenly bodies. The plan however seemed almost impracticable. Her father was growing old, a little peevish at any opposition to his will, and more and more settled in his daily round of habits. He was impatient at his daughter's absence, except when he visited his fields and gave directions to his one labourer, a business which seldom occupied more than an hour at a time. The old man was kind and sagacious. His slightest peculiarities were dear to her; and no image she had ever seen with her bodily eyes was to her so agreeable as that of the grey-headed and weather-beaten face. But often, while she sat beside him and supplied his little wants, or answered his few and simple observations, her thoughts would wander away to the restless boundless sea, with all its shores and

ships; and the little world around her, for which alone she had outwardly lived, and which alone she knew, seemed poor and small, compared with the dazzling and amazing world of which she knew nothing. She naturally avoided to express her feelings, which she was aware were stronger and more unusual than her father, or any of her acquaintance, could understand or would approve. But the books which he found her reading, and the questions she sometimes ventured to ask as to the seaport town which he had visited in his earlier life, in part betrayed her. One day during such a conversation he suddenly exclaimed, "Heaven help thee! the sea seems always running in thy head! I should not wonder if the first idle sailor that comes wandering here catches thy foolish fancy, and carries thee off from all our honest country fellows. But take care, Jane,—they are an unsteady, spendthrift, drunken set. At best their trade keeps them many a long month in every year away from their wives and children. Don't marry a sailor, Jane; don't marry a sailor; or thy old father will break his heart."

This advice was not very likely to change the current of Jane's thoughts. Her longing to look upon the sea grew rather the stronger; but to gratify it was not easy. The summit of the hills which bounded that inland country, was not further off than two hours' walking; but this was

through unfrequented paths and lonely sheep-tracks up the downs. The village lay on no line of traffic with the coast; and to undertake an expedition to the shore without some purpose of business would have sounded among her neighbours like setting off on a crusade or a pilgrimage. She shrank from owning her beloved secret even to her father; and nothing therefore remained but to plan a clandestine excursion. This was only possible at night. A ramble of the kind however had nothing very alarming for a country girl. The imaginative apprehensions, which alone presented themselves to the mind of Jane, added to the charm, by enhancing the dignity of her enterprise. Spirits, she thought, must needs be peculiarly her attendants on the most momentous occasion of her whole life, which had now reached the mature age of eighteen.

The moon was shining in the summer sky, when she crept through her chamber-window, and sprang lightly on the ground. Had any one seen her, it must have seemed, from the excitement of her look and manner under the homeliness of her dark dress, that she was bent on a different kind of meeting from that which she really meditated. She traversed the little garden, and went on by well-known paths, which led her away from the village, and under the shade of hedges and coppices. Rapidly and with beating heart she walked through quiet fields of corn, and

began to think that she was now escaping all danger of interruption. In an hour she reached the less cultivated and less populous tract, which divided the plain from the upland. Here she heard from behind her the church-clock, which she knew so well, striking midnight. The path was no longer familiar to her; but she knew the direction she had to take; and her task increased in seriousness and interest, the more completely she appeared engaged in it. The downs arose grim and grey before her; and, after exploring for a few minutes, she struck into the path that climbed their sides, and felt that she had entered on a new world. But she began to be a little fatigued, and mounted the hills with less quickness than she crossed the valley. Still she met no human being. The moon was rising above her head, and displayed her road; and she thought that she perceived the fresh sea-breeze blowing down from the heights upon her face. As she drew nearer and nearer to this aërial summit, which she had so often looked at almost with tears, she could hardly believe the reality of her happiness. In spite of her weariness, her heart was borne up with wings. She paused for a moment a few yards below the top of the ascent, and then ran headlong on,—and stopped.

There lay the sea beneath her, one sheet of indistinct grey and moonshine, with the dark land running off on each side. In the obscurity an

angelic vision moved along, with the moon glancing on its white face; it must be,—could it be? —a ship! She felt how deep her own emotions were at the aspect of immense and unknown power, though she could not have explained the cause. The excitement of her mind did not fail after its first rise, but varied and prolonged itself during her minuter examination of all that lay before her. The moonbeams shifted slowly, as the luminary journeyed on and stooped towards the horizon. Here and there the stars were faintly reflected in the gauze-veiled mirror. The ship passed on in silent ghostliness, and disappeared; while the weak murmur of the waters on the shore beneath came to her as if whispering a secret which she vainly strained her ear to catch. She stood charmed to the spot, until the first glimpses of the early dawn began to mingle with the gleams of night. And now she drank in, with a mighty insatiable thirst, each moment of the great unfolding vision. The brightening clouds,—the strengthening breeze,—the cold sad sparkling of the sea under the eye of day,—the colouring of the landscape, and the starting into clearness of many vessels,—all these were memorable events to Jane. But the weariness of the body and the exhaustion of the over-excited mind compelled her to rest; and by the increasing light she saw, a few yards beneath her, a small hollow in the hill, marked by an old thorn-tree

which shaded a few large stones. On one of them she sat, and watched the scene before her, till, in spite of her efforts, her eyes closed against the light, and her head drooped sideways against the bank.

Chapter II.

JANE had lost all consciousness, and was recalled from sleep only by a voice, at which she started; and the first object that caught her eyes, was a young man, who stood before her with the broad sunshine streaming like a glory round his face, and with a figure so graceful, and an attitude of surprise so lively, that Jane, in the midst of her fear, could not but think him the most beautiful object she had ever seen. It was a young sailor, who had taken off his hat to enjoy the air, while climbing up the steep cliffs, and whose exclamation on seeing the sleeping girl had disturbed the dreams of her native village and her cottage hearth.

"No offence, I hope, young woman; but I could not help calling out when I found you here, where I expected only the old thorn-tree."

"Oh, no," she answered, "it is my fault,—that is, I believe I have been asleep, and it is very wrong."

"Well, I do not see much harm, unless you

had fallen asleep when it was your watch on deck; and you're hardly a sailor yet. But, if I may make so bold, it must be something out of the way that brings you here at this hour of the morning. The sun is not above half an hour up. I have been this way pretty well at all hours; and I never found any one here yet but an old shepherd, and perhaps sometimes of an evening a pair of sweethearts; and you are none of the neighbours;—I know them, young and old, for three miles round."

Then came the explanation of Jane's adventure; and, in telling it slightly as she did, there was to her own feelings a strain of extravagance in it, which she had never perceived till now, when she was compelled to speak of it. The stranger was full of wonder; but he thought, from her look and manner, she must be telling the truth. His determination to find out how this was, gained strength perhaps from her personal charms; for the rounded active figure and the soft face, with her bright eyes, and long pale hair curling from under her bonnet, were not lost on one who in his voyages had seen many a pretty maiden, but never a prettier than Jane Martin. He immediately proposed, as he had no business that could not wait, to take care of her back to her father's. She refused with a deep blush and downcast look, and, wishing him a good morning, had turned to go; but her steps faltered, partly,

doubtless, from fatigue. In a moment the young sailor was at her side, and insisted that she was too weak to return without his help. The arrangement was soon made; and at four o'clock in the morning the pair set off on their walk, which, according to Jane's design, ought to have ended about the same hour.

The road however was now down hill. She had succeeded in the greatest aim she had ever conceived; and her companion's arm was of much assistance. Jane discovered, in the first half-hour of their acquaintance, that he was the son of a fisherman's widow, living in a cottage at the foot of the cliff. He had early gone to sea, and now, at the age of twenty-two, had risen to be second mate of a merchantman, in which he had made a voyage to the Mediterranean. On returning to England, he had been on a visit to his mother, and had set out that morning to walk across the country to Southport, where he hoped again to obtain employment, and perhaps in a better situation than his last. After several other questions and replies, "How," she said, "do you pass the hours, when there is nothing to be done in the ship?"

"I read or sing, or think of my friends at home; and I fancy that some day or other there may be some one on shore, younger and prettier than my poor mother, who may remember me when I am away, as I should remember her."

If Jane had been a lady, she would hardly have answered, "Well, when I have nothing to do, I mostly think of the sea, and how men pass their lives upon it, and what sights they have to look at."

"And all this, though you have no friend a sailor,—no brother or cousin, or lad that you used to play with when you were both children?"

She blushed, and said, "No,—no one. My mother's father was a sailor; and I have read of many more in books; but I never saw one to speak to before."

"And have you never thought if you would like to have a friend who had made many a voyage? Would it not be pleasant to be able to fancy that one you knew was on the wide waves, and thinking of you while you would be remembering him?—some one whose return you would look for, and who would bring you new stories every trip, of all he had fallen in with, and perhaps some pretty trifles, and gowns and lace, from foreign parts?"

It was with a low deep longing voice that she answered, "Oh, that would be too much happiness!" Then she hung her head, and hid her face from him, but leaned the more clingingly on his arm. In truth she was almost overpowered by fatigue and want of sleep; and they were now at last within a stone's-throw of her father's door. She turned from the lane they

were walking in, and passed over a stile into one of his fields; and when they reached the orchard behind the cottage, she begged William to remain at its little gate, while she went forward; for she did not know in what state she might find her father on account of her absence. He remained leaning on the gate for a few seconds, till startled by a woman's scream, when he hurried in, and, pushing through a passage which contained three or four persons, all in confusion, he found himself in the old man's bedroom. There were several neighbours round the bed, on which he lay apparently insensible; and Jane stood supporting herself by one of the bedposts, and with her eyes fixed on his face. William went to her side, and saw the closed eyes gradually open, and the father begin to see. The first objects he beheld were his daughter, and the young man standing by her in his sailor's dress. He looked at them long and sadly, and at last muttered, "I was sure it would be so."

Jane now begged that she might be left alone with her father, who was used to her attendance, and specially requested William, as he was a stranger, to stay in the outer room till she could go and speak to him. Reluctantly, and shaking their heads, the neighbours went away. The father was still very feeble; and it was only after long delay, broken by floods of tears from her, that she could communicate the story of her

own proceedings, and could learn what he had to tell. On getting up, and not finding her in the house, he had hurried about his premises, and, still missing her, had alarmed the nearest neighbours, and sent in different directions to look for her. But when two or three of the messengers returned without any tidings, he had fainted away; and a crowd had gathered round him, as he lay on his bed, the moment before Jane arrived. In an hour he felt sufficiently strong to rise; and he and his daughter went to rejoin the sailor, and offered him breakfast, of which they partook with him. But his fresh and lively look was very different from the stern sadness of the father, and from Jane's deep and confused dejection. He was not discouraged however from speaking, nor she from listening. Even the old man relaxed into civility before he took leave.

It was not many days till he came again; and Jane soon learned that he had put off his journey to Southport. Thenceforth they met frequently; and in the summer evenings he was seen walking about the quiet country lanes with Jane leaning on his arm. It was no surprise therefore to the village, when the banns were read in the church for the marriage of Jane Martin and William Laurence. With slow gestures and thoughtful eyes her father gave her to her husband. They returned to live with him; and in the first glad flush of their love the old man died. His death

was a shock to Jane, but not a lasting grief. She loved William too fully and entirely, to feel any gap in her life while she possessed him; and though she would have been ready to toil for her father's comfort, had he lived, his death was far from overpowering her. Nay,—though it is a severe truth,—she felt relieved from his silent forebodings, and seemed to belong more entirely to William, now that all other claims on her had ceased.

Not long after this, William's mother was taken ill; and he was sent for to see her. She died before his return; and both were now deprived of all they had much loved beyond each other. In a few weeks it became necessary for William to go again to his former home, in order to sell the furniture and let the cottage; and Jane proposed to accompany him. She rejoiced in the thought of again seeing the place where they had first met, and of knowing more familiarly that ocean which she had obtained so insufficient a glimpse of. They went thither, and took up their abode in the sea-side cottage. All about it spoke of maritime occupation. The house was partly constructed of wreck. The paling round the puny garden was of the broken and pitchy boarding of boats; and the shingle lay driven in barren heaps against it. Within a stone's-throw two or three fishing-boats were drawn up on the beach; and the children of the fishers' families played along

the shore. In the cottage there was great want of many of the inland comforts Jane had been used to; but there were a few articles of trans-marine curiosity, brought home by William, such as uncut coral and pink-hearted shells.

Through the greater part of the day the husband and wife were busy in their household affairs, examining and arranging their new possessions. But in the evening they felt more at liberty, and they strolled together along the shore. Jane knew not what it was that attracted her; but she had an obscure notion of a wonderful and friendly power in the sea, as if its movements had been the beatings of a mighty paternal breast, on which she could lay her head. She walked along the outermost line of foam; and every wave that broke delighted her, while at intervals she turned and stood, and looked over the waters with vague but deep emotion. A child who has been gazing at a lovely star, till he almost fancies it his own, would not be more gratified by seeing it suddenly drop from the skies into his lap.

"Jane," said William, "you seem as much pleased as a child with a new toy; yet the sea is not to be joked with. Though there is only a little ripple on it now, I have seen a swell that frightened the best seaman on board; and many a hundred,—ay, many a thousand ships, with all their crews, have gone to the bottom, smooth as you may think it atop. I must tell you some

stories of shipwrecks, that you may not fancy it all plain sailing, and may be willing to go back home, away from the surf."

"You need not," said Jane; "I heard plenty such stories from my mother, and I have not forgotten one of them. Besides the woman with the green hair, who appeared to my grandfather, is dreadful enough."

"The woman with the green hair!" said William, suddenly. "Who saw that? who told you of it?"

"My grandfather saw it twice; and my mother told me of it. He used to make voyages to Holland and Germany, I think; for I remember my mother showing me the places in our old map. Once he had not long left the port, somewhere abroad, when the fog began to thicken round him, and the wind at the same time to rise. The sailors wanted him to turn back; but he would not; for he was a very bold and obstinate man. The weather grew worse and worse; and at last, when he had just refused the advice of all on board to go back into harbour, he saw a figure rise out of the water on the side nearest the wind, and float in the air against the fog, close to the mast. She put out her hands, as if to push him and his ship back; and he noticed her so well, that he could describe her as he could any of his friends. She was young and handsome, in a long grey dress, with pale green hair hanging

down over her neck. My grandfather would not heed; and that night his ship was dashed upon the shore, and he lost everything he had. All his crew were drowned; and he was thrown upon the beach himself, almost a corpse."

"Well," said William, "was that all? did he ever see her again?"

"Yes. For some years after, he made successful voyages; and he spoke to his family of the sight he had seen, as of something strange and remarkable, but not as if it had been of any real importance. My mother had heard him describe the figure so often, that she said she felt as if she had seen it herself. After she had been married some months, she went with her husband to pay her father a visit, before he should sail on what he intended should be his last voyage. He had laid out most of his property in a cargo for the vessel, and expected to make a great deal of money by it. The evening before he was to sail, he was returning from the harbour to the house he lived in, a mile or two out of Southport. The way lay along the sea-side; and it was a beautiful summer evening, with a slight sunny mist spread over the water. After he had got clear of the town, he turned round to look at the masts of his ship, which were plain enough to be seen; and he noticed an odd movement, with some faint lines in the sunshine, above the water. It grew clearer and clearer, till he saw that it was the

woman with the green hair. He could have thought it not an hour since he last saw her; so exactly was she the same, except that now a weak yellow brightness from the sun fell over her grey dress and pale green hair. She waved her hand and looked at him, so that he understood well enough that she warned him not to go back to the ship. At first, he owned, he was dreadfully frightened; but, as she did not cease her warnings, he turned his head from her, and proceeded on his way. He did not dare look back again, till he had struck into a path that led down a hollow, so that the sea was hidden from him. There was then no appearance of the figure. He came home much changed in his manner; and his face and voice were very sad, when he told his wife and daughter what had happened to him. But he could not afford to give up his voyage; and besides he would not have borne to be laughed at by his friends, as he must have been had he staid on shore for such a reason."

"And what came of it?"

"My mother never saw him after the next morning, when he went to sea. He was washed overboard and drowned before the eyes of his crew. I was born three or four months after; and my mother was so affected by her loss, and by the story of the green-haired woman, that she thought the impression made on her had given me the same kind of features and look, as

those of the appearance described by my grandfather. My hair indeed has never that I know of been green."

William was long silent: at last he said, "Jane, I must tell you what I am thinking of. I heard this story told by an old sailor of Southport, who said he had sailed in the ship, the master of which was lost as you have just related, though I had no notion that he was your grandfather. But I have seen the green-haired woman twice myself. I was in the Mediterranean, and was the mate keeping watch on deck. The night was cloudy; but every now and then we had a good glimpse of moonshine. The moon however was hidden, when I happened to be looking towards the larboard bow, and saw, right abreast of the foremast, hanging against the clouds, the sort of figure you spoke of, with her green hair falling about her. Her body and dress seemed much the colour of the clouds behind, so that I could not make out her shape; but just then a flash of moonshine came, and I saw her as plain as I see you. She seemed, as you said, to be signing to us to change our course. I called one of the seamen to try if he could notice anything in the direction in which I saw her; but at the moment of his turning his head she disappeared. I tried to think no more of it; and an hour after a Greek pirate came up and boarded us with a dozen men; we had to fight for it hand to hand, and lost three lives

before we got rid of the scoundrels; and I had a wound in my shoulder that I feel even yet. Now it is strange that the course the figure signed to us to steer, would, as we found the next day, have taken us clear away from the pirate, into the midst of the British squadron of men-of-war. But there is something more curious than this. You say your mother thought you had taken after the build of the figure, from her hearing it spoken of by her father; now, when I saw you the first time that morning up yonder at the lover's seat, the first thing that struck me was,—Well that girl is the likest I ever saw to the green-haired woman. Your hair even had a little greenish look, though that perhaps was from the shade of the old thorn-tree above you. I have never since been able to get it out of my head, that you and she are somehow sisters, though I never saw two sisters so much alike."

Jane laughed, not very heartily, and owned it was strange that he, as well as her mother, should have noticed the likeness. "But you spoke," she said, "of seeing this figure twice. How did it happen the second time?"

"Oh! that was much less remarkable. My old captain made my fortune by promoting me to be a mate, and getting me some education. Soon afterwards he gave up the ship; and, as he was walking home from the town, I went half-a-mile or so with him to bid him good by. I was

thanking him for his kindness, when he said he wanted no thanks; but he would be glad if I would promise him one thing, and this was, that, if ever by any chance he went to sea again, I would sail with him. I was looking up in his face, and was saying, Yes, when I saw over his shoulder, above a clump of trees on the top of the down where it looks along the sea, the same figure of the green-haired woman. It was bright sunshine, and I saw her quite plainly. She was frowning and making signs to me, as if to prevent me from promising; but I was not to be stopped so easily; and I gave the old man my word, I would go with him immediately on his letting me know, unless I should have taken a berth in another ship beforehand."

"And would you go now, that you are married?"

"To be sure I would,—I must. Why, what harm should happen to you when I am away? And we should be all the better pleased with each other on my return after a four or five months' voyage. But I don't think there is much chance of it; for the old man has made his fortune, and is not likely to spend it."

Chapter III.

THE husband and wife returned in a few days from the sea-coast to their inland farm; and time passed on quietly with them until their son was born. Young Richard,—for so he was named, after his maternal grandfather,—was a new happiness to both the parents. William too had grown tolerably familiar with rural occupations, and was pleased with the cultivation of his land. It was now again midsummer; and the village, with its fields and trees, looked as beautiful as when Jane set out on her first expedition to the sea. But how different were her feelings now! It seemed to her as if in some mysterious way she had, in William, married the sea itself; and her restless fancies were all quieted. But this calm was not to last. It was a bright July evening; and William had come in from the fields, and was sitting down to his meal with his wife, who was preparing the table, while he danced the child upon his knee, when the postman came to the door with a letter, which, from the rarity of the occurrence, startled them as if it had been a gunshot fired into the room. The father turned pale when he saw the handwriting, and laid the child on the floor. It was a letter from his old captain, saying that he had lost his fortune

by an unsuccessful speculation, and was now about to embark on a voyage to Brazil, in which he claimed William's promised help as chief mate of the ship. He saw at once that he must go. Jane spent the evening and most of the night in weeping, while he endeavoured to explain his wishes as to her mode of life in his absence, and the measures she should take for the management of the farm, which, with her active rural habits, did not promise to be a very difficult business. The next morning at daybreak he started from Meadham on his way to Southport; and Jane and her child were left to cheer each other as they might.

The autumn and winter passed on; and with the spring she had the hope of seeing her husband again. But not so was it to be. The spring brightened into summer; but William came not with the leaves and crops. The summer advanced to maturity; but the husband of Jane did not come to reap his harvest. She could no longer endure the sight of Meadham; and, as the sea-side cottage was now again untenanted, she resolved to remove thither, as if, in being nearer the sea, she should be nearer to William. She intrusted her farm to a labourer on whom she could rely, and went with her child to live upon the strange and inhospitable shore. For some weeks she would spend hours in looking over the sea, and watching every vessel; but she grew

weary of this habit, and devoted herself to her son. He was growing into a vigorous and lively child; and his likeness to his father perpetually reminded her of the husband she had lost. Her talk with the boy related almost entirely to the life and exploits of seamen; and she seemed to devote him from his infancy to the task of one day following and recovering his parent. Nothing gave her so much pleasure as to see him mingle with the fishermen and their children, and so partly prepare himself for his future life. Once indeed she returned to Meadham for a few days, in order to arrange the affairs of the farm, and took Richard with her. But the delight with which he beheld the inland cultivation, the large trees, the green and yellow fields, and the comparative comfort and spaciousness of the farm-house, so alarmed his mother, that she never let him return there for more than a few hours. Gradually he came to consider the sea as his inevitable destination, and to share in her superstition that, if he but sailed on a distant voyage, he could not fail to find his father. He was about eight years old, when he begged to be allowed to accompany one of the fishermen in his voyage to Southport (where was the market for his fish), and back to the fishing village,—an expedition which in all probability would only last a day. He departed in all the joyousness of childhood; and his mother, who had clothed him in a new dress,

like that of a full-grown seaman, and not like that of a fisherman, saw the boat set sail with her son on board, as happily as if he had been going to his wedding. But, while her eyes were still fixed on it, and before it had gained twenty yards from the beach, she discovered, sitting beside the mast, and as it were pushing the child towards the land, the grey figure of a woman with long green hair. She could not be mistaken; it was distinctly visible against the dark red sail; Jane sank back on the shingle, pointing towards it with her outstretched hand. After a long delay she found strength to regain her home, and spent the whole day at the window which overlooked the sea, with her eyes fixed on the point of the headland, round which the fishing-boat would first come in sight. It was a clear and glowing evening close upon sunset, when the dark sail crept into view, and looked a spot of blood in the bright and glassy expanse lighted up by the sun, now setting behind the down from which Jane had first beheld the sea. She now watched the boat that bore her only child: she hardly observed any of the other sails that glided over the waters, most of them at a greater distance than the one she eyed so fixedly. Among these was a square rigged vessel coming from the north into the bay, with coals for the neighbouring population, and pressing on, anxious to save the tide for unloading, so as to leave the unprotected beach on the following morning.

Jane knew nothing of this; but, as she continued to observe the boat while it drew on, and the ship advanced in a converging line, and both were hardly now more than a mile away from her, by some mismanagement on both sides the boat was run down. It upset on the instant; and Jane could distinguish one of the two men who were in it clinging to a rope flung from the ship. What became of the other lives she could not see. But for her the event was enough. Connected with her husband's history, and the appearance in the morning, the accident spoke plainly to her mind. After the first horror, she sat motionless with stiffened eyes, till the ship took the ground, when perhaps with some miserable revival of hope, she ran out of the house towards it. The first person she met was the rescued fisherman, who shook his head and dropped his hand before she reached him: she sat down on the beach, stooped her forehead on her knees, and asked him no questions. Before an hour some of the neighbouring women had gathered round her. At last one of them ventured to address her, and, taking courage from her silence, lifted her up in her arms: she made no resistance, but walked quickly to her home. Only on their attempting to lay her on her bed she turned fiercely away, and sat down at the window from which she had witnessed the destruction of the boat.

The women found they could make no change

in her determination; for she only answered them by requests that they would leave her to herself. They at last complied; and she remained alone at her open lattice in the deepening twilight. Through it was to be seen the line of coast to the right, with the black ship lying at a quarter of a mile from her, beset with men and waggons engaged in unloading the coals. The shore beyond stretched away in a dark line terminated by the headland, round which she had seen the boat disappear in the morning, and again return scarcely two hours ago. She fixed her eyes upon the water between this promontory and her, and saw them far in the night gradually brighten beneath the moon. It was after midnight when, in this trembling radiance, she discerned a hazy speck hovering above the waves; and, as she gazed more earnestly, it became the woman with the preter-human hair, who was again distinctly marked, and looking mournfully at her. A dark mass seemed rolling before her in the water; and as she and it drew close to the shore, the expression of the sea-woman's face became so piteous, that Jane got up and went to the edge of the water, where, driven at that instant on the shingle, lay the body of her son. She lifted it from the waves, and sat down on the beach with the cold and heavy corpse upon her knees. It was dressed in the new blue clothes which she had made for

him with so much pleasure after the model of those worn by his father. The water from them covered her with moisture, over which at last the warm tears fell down, while she felt the dead unresisting limbs, and looked on the pale face and staring eyes. The dark brown hair still hung about the forehead, dripping with the brine, and showing none of the curls which she had so often handled. All else seemed changed; but by long gazing she could still recognise, in the moonshine, the fair boyish features, and lips that never more would smile on her. She could not bear the horny stare of the eyes; and she gently closed the lids before she lifted the body, and walked with it to her home. When there, she called for no help of her neighbours, but laid it on the little grass-plot, while she went and struck a light. She again lifted the burthen, and laid it on her own bed, in which her boy had always slept. She took off the clothes, washed away the sand and salt, stretched him, as if in sleep, where he had been used to lie, and then threw herself beside the senseless clay, and pressed it to her bosom. Passionate grief and floods of tears followed; and then again she lay exhausted and helpless, till her returning strength broke out anew in bursts of misery. At last she was motionless as the corpse itself, and almost equally lifeless. While she was in this state, with her moveless arms hanging round

the body, a stranger, in the first grey of the dawn, entered the house, the door of which was unfastened, and saw, by the sickly expiring light, the spectacle of the mother and her dead child. At first he started and shuddered, but soon began to gaze steadily on the pair, till, gathering conviction, he exclaimed, "Jane, Jane, can this be you?"

She raised herself slowly and silently in the bed from beside her child, and looked at the speaker. A minute passed before she cried aloud, "William, I have killed our boy." It was indeed William, returned a broken and haggard man. They spent the following hours in such melancholy talk as became their condition. Jane learned that her husband's vessel had been wrecked on the coast of South America, that he and one or two others had escaped, but had been long detained in the interior, partly by the whites, partly among the Indians, had made several unsuccessful attempts to reach Europe, and only now, after eight years' absence, had arrived in England in a vessel from Monte Video. He had landed at Southport, and hastened to the fishing village, which was hardly out of his road to Meadham, and where he expected to hear some intelligence of his wife and child.

The corpse was borne in its coffin on the shoulders of the fishermen along the path to

Meadham; for the cart-road went many miles round. William and Jane walked together behind the bearers up the down, and past the lover's seat where they had first met, and along the whole track on which that summer morning she had been supported by his arm while returning to her father's house. His hair was now grey, but hers was white as snow.

A CHRONICLE OF ENGLAND.

From Blackwood's Magazine for 1840.

Hark! above the Sea of Things,
How the uncouth mermaid sings:
Wisdom's Pearl doth often dwell
Closed in Fancy's rainbow shell.

"SISTER," said the little one to her companion, "dost thou remember aught of this fair bay, these soft white sands, and yonder woody rocks?"

"Nay," replied the other, who was somewhat taller, and with a fuller yet sweet voice, "I knew not that I had ever been here before. And yet it seems not altogether new, but like a vision seen in dreams. The sea ripples on the sand with a sound which I feel as friendly and not unknown. Those purple shapes that rise out of the distant blue, and float past over the surface like the shadows of clouds, do not fill me with the terror which haunts me when I look on vast and strange appearances."

"To me," said the little one, "they look only somewhat more distinct than the marks which I have so often watched upon the sea."

"Oh! far brighter are they in colour, far more peculiar and more various in their forms. My

heart beats while I look at them. There are ships and horses, living figures, bearded, crowned, armed, and some bear banners and some books, and softer shapes, waving and glistening with plumes, veils, and garlands. Ah! now 'tis gone."

"Rightly art thou called the Daughter of the Sea, and art indeed our own Sea-Child. Here in this bay did I and my sisters, in this land of Faëry, first find our nursling of another race."

"Was this then my first name among you, beloved friends? The bay is so beautiful, that, even in your land of Faëry, I have seen no spot where it were better to open one's eyes upon the light."

"Yes, here did our Sea-Child first meet our gaze. I and a troop of my sisters were singing on the shore our ancient Song of Pearls, and watching the sun, which, while we sang, and while it went down, changed the sands its beams fell on into gold, and the foam that rippled to the shore into silver. We had often watched it before; and we knew that, if without ceasing our song we gathered the gold sands and silver foam while the sun was on them, into the shells that lay about, they would continue in their changed state. Left till sunset, they returned to what they were, and we had only the sands and foam. We thought the sport so pleasant, that we had carried it on for some minutes, and even amused ourselves with

scattering the shining dust over each other's hair, when I saw something floating between us and the sun. We all looked; and soon it drifted near us, and was entangled in the web of sea-weed that waves in the tide round this black single rock. A large sea-eagle at the moment stooped to seize the prize. But I wished myself there before it; and one bound carried me farther than a long stone's-throw of our dark enemies the mountaineers. Thus the eagle in his descent struck only the waters with his talons, and flew off again screaming to the clouds, while I brought what I had won to my sisters."

"Dear one!" said the Sea-Child, "I guess what it was." And she kissed the airy face of her companion with her own, which seemed rather of rose-leaves, and the other only of coloured vapour.

"Yes," said she, "my own Sea-Child, there was a small basket of palm-leaf lined with the down of the phœnix; and in this the baby lay asleep. Beautiful it was indeed, but far unlike the beauty of my sisters. We cared no more for gold or silver dust, or rippling waves, or the rays of the setting sun. We even hushed our song, and bent over our nursling, and took her to be our own. Thus was it that our Sea-Child came to our Faëryland."

The Sea-Child bent to embrace her friend; for she was somewhat taller than the elfin sprite.

They could not hold each other in their arms; for one was gleaming air, and the other human substance. But the fairy hung round the child, as the reflection of a figure in bright water round one who bathes at the same spot of the same transparent pool. To the phantom it was more delightful than to rest and breathe upon a bank of flowers: to the mortal it seemed as if she was encompassed by a soft warm air, full of the odours of opening carnations and of ripe fruits.

"Let us sit here," said the Sea-Child, "and look around us, and discourse."

She placed herself on a mossy stone at the foot of a green birch-tree; and the fairy sat on the extremity of one of the sprays, which hung beside her companion's face, and which hardly bent a hair's-breadth with her weight. By one hand she held to a leaf above her, and with the other touched the dark-brown locks that streamed round the mortal head. The child sat, and looked down, and seemed to think, till the fairy said, "Why art thou sad? Of what art thou musing?"

The child blushed, and stooped her head, and at last looked up confusedly and said: "I never before felt so strongly the difference between me and you, who call me sister. Here, while we sit together on the spot where I was first wafted to your hands, it seems to me strange,—so strange! —that ye should have adopted me for your own,

and not thrown me back into the waters, or left me a prey to the mountaineers, from whom ye have so long protected me."

"Strange!" said the other, "how strange? We could do no otherwise than we did. I know not how it is, that our Sea-Child often speaks as if it were possible to do aught else than what one wishes. We felt we loved you: we saw that, in that pretty but solid mortal frame, there was a breath and beauty like our own, though also something akin to those huge enemies, who, but for our cunning, would swiftly have devoured thee."

"I too never thought of it in former years; but now, when I believe I am really capable of loving you, when I more want to be loved, and to find nothing dividing me from you, it seems so unnatural, so horrible, that I should be altogether unlike you. You are all of sunbeams and bright hues, and are soft like dewy gossamers; and I,—my limbs, through which no ray can pass, my head, that crushes the flowers I rest it on, as if it had been a head carved in stone!—Oh, sister! I am wretched at the thought. I touched the wing of a butterfly only yesterday with my finger; and I could perceive it shrink and shiver with pain. My touch had bruised its wing; and I thought I could see it ache, as it flew frightened away."

She burst into tears; and these were the first that ever were shed in Faëryland. But there

they could not flow long; and she soon shook them from her eyes, and looked up smiling and said: "There thou see'st, dear sister, how unfit I am to live with such as thee. Better perhaps had I met my natural fate, and been destroyed on my first arrival by thy monstrous foes, or by the eagle from which thou didst save me."

"Strange would it have been, if we had not had wit enough to disappoint that big, brutal race!"

"I never could well understand why it was that they hated either you or me."

"They could not do otherwise being what they are,—thou what thou art,—and we the sprites thou knowest us. Curious is the tale, and long to tell, of all that has happened betwixt them and us."

"How came ye to have such dreadful inhabitants in your isle of Faëry?"

"Ah! that I know not. They and we seem to belong to it by the same necessity, Before thou camest we had no measure of time; which we now reckon, as thou knowest, by thy years, not by ours. Till then our existence was like what thou describest thy dreams to be. It is in watching thee, that we have learned to mark how thy fancies and wishes and actions rise and succeed one another, as the sun and moon, the stars and clouds travel and change. And even now I hardly *feel*, as thou appearest to do, what is meant by *to-day*,

yesterday, and to-morrow. Of times and years therefore I can tell thee little. We grow not old, nor cease to be young. Nor can we say of each other, as we can of thee,—thou art such a one, and none else. We discern differences of sunshine and shade, of land and sea, of wind and calm; but all of us feel alike under the same circumstances, and have no fixed peculiarity of being, such as that which makes thee so different from us. I know not whether it was I, or some other of my sisters, who visited this field and shore yesterday, and the day before danced in the showering drops of the white waterfall yonder up the valley. Each of us feels as all do, and all as each. I love thee not more than do my sisters, nor they more than I. Of our past life I only know, that we seemed always to have been in this our own land, and to have been happy here. The flowers fill us with odours, the sky with warmth; the dews bathe us in delight; the moonbeams wind us in a ring with filmy threads when we dance upon the sands; and, when the woods murmur above us, we have a thrill of quiet joy, which belongs not to me more than to another, but is the common bliss of all. Of all times have the mountains and deep ravines and bare and rocky uplands of our isle been the abode of a fierce and ugly race of giants, whom we have been accustomed to call our brothers, and to believe them allied with us

by nature, though between us there has ever been a mortal enmity."

"Often, often," said the Sea-Child, "have I thought how much happier we should be, had there been no giants in the land."

"I know not," replied the fairy, "how that might be. Much is the vexation that they cause us; but it is said that our race is inseparable from theirs, and that, if they were altogether destroyed, we also must perish. Never, till we had thee among us, did their enmity seem very dangerous, difficult as it often was to avoid their injuries. Always, as now, when the shadows of the storm-cloud swept from the hills over our plains, when the dark mist rolled out of the ravines down to our sunny meadows, the shaggy and huge creatures strode forth from their caves and forests, leaning on their pine clubs, shouting and growling, defacing our green and flowery sward with their weighty tramp, and scaring us away before them. When, as it has happened, some of us were trodden beneath their feet, or dashed below their swinging clubs, a faint shriek, a sudden blaze burst from under the blow; and all of us, lurking beneath the waterfalls, clinging amid the hidden nooks of flowers, or shrunken into sparry grottoes in the rocks, felt stricken and agonized, although none of us could cease to live. All round this bay, and others larger and more broken of our shore, the giant horde

of our brothers would sit upon the cliffs and crags, looking themselves like prodigious rocks, and, with the rain and storm about them, and the sea-foam dashing up against their knees, would wash their dark beards in the brine, and seem to laugh aloud at the sound of the tempest. But when calm and sunshine were about to return, they always sprang from their places on the shore, and, like one of those herds of wild bulls that they chase before them, hurried back with dizzy bellowings, and rush of limbs and clubs, into their dark mountains. Sometimes indeed they were more malicious, and sought more resolutely to do us mischief. I have knowu them tear asunder the jaws of one of their hill-torrents, so as to pour the waters suddenly on our fields and vallies. Sometimes too we have seen them standing upon the mountains, with their figures marked against the sky, plying great stems of trees around a mass of snow and ice, till, loosened at last, it rolled down mile after mile, crashing through wood and stream. Thus our warm bright haunts were buried under a frozen heap of ruins, while the laughter of the mountain-monsters rang through the air, above the roar of the falling mass. But often we had our revenge. Once, when the storms had gathered fiercely on those far hills, and rushed in rainy gusts and black fogs down every gully, and opened at last over the green vale

and sunny bay, our brothers hurried in tumult from their own region, their swinish ears tossing in the dark folds of their locks and beards, and, with mouths like wolves, drinking in the tempest as they ran. They rioted and triumphed on the shore, while the wind whistled loudly round them; and they played with the billows which tumbled on the beach, as I have seen you play with lambs in the green fields. We peeped from the grottoes where we had hidden ourselves, and saw them catch some round black heaps out of the waters, like skins of animals full of liquid. These they threw at each other, till at last one burst, and covered the giant whom it had struck with a red stain. On this there was a loud shout: they flung the skins about no more, but caught them tenderly in their arms, lifted them to their mouths, bit them open and drained the contents. This increased their tumult and grim joy; and they turned to the meadow, and began to wrestle and leap and tear down the young trees, and disport themselves, till one by one they sank upon the turf in sleep. The storm was clearing off: we ventured from our hiding-places, and looked upon the hairy dismal shapes, that lay scattered and heaped like brown rocks overgrown with weeds and moss. Suddenly we all looked at each other, and determined what to do. We pierced through the crevices of our grottoes, till we reached a fount of sunny fire.

This we drew upwards by our singing to follow us, and led it in a channel over the grass, till it formed a stream of diamond light, dividing this field from the mountains, and encircling the whole host of giants. The warm sunshine at the same time began to play on them. They felt the soft sweet flowery air of our lower land; our songs sounded in their bristled ears; and they began to toss, roll, snort, and endeavoured to rise and escape to their dark hills. But this was not so easy now. They could not pass the bright pure stream. The sunshine, in which we revelled, weakened them so much that they could not rise and stand, but staggered on their knees, fell upon their hands and faces, and seemed to dissolve away, like their own ice-crags when flung with all their clay and withered herbage down into our warm lakes and dells. We thought there was now a chance of seeing our enemies, who were also our brothers, for ever destroyed. We began to deliberate whether we also should necessarily perish with them, when we heard a sudden gust of wind and flash of rain; another storm broke from the mountains; a torrent of snow-water quenched our diamond flame. The giants stood up, bold, wild, and strong as ever, leaped, roared, and swung their clubs, and, with the friendly tempest playing round them, stormed back into the depths of their own mountain world."

"Could ye not," said the Sea-Child, "have always taken refuge from them in the lower garden, where I have been with you?"

"We did not know it till thou wert among us, and should perhaps never have ventured thither, had we not been driven to distress by the hatred of the giants for thee. When we had thee for our nursling and sister, their attempts were no longer bursts of violence that passed away. They seemed always lying in wait to discover and to destroy thee. Had we not known a strain of music, of power when sung to frighten them away, thou, dear Sea-Child, wouldst long ere this have been taken from us. When they came rushing down in the wind and darkness, and sought for thee in every thicket, and every hollow tree, and under each of those large pink shells which we often made thy bed, they sang and shouted together such words as these:

Lump and thump, and rattling clatter,
These the brawny brothers love;
While the lightnings flash and shatter,
While the winds the forest tatter,
We too spatter, stamp, and batter,
Whirling our clubs at whate'er's above.

But we too had our song; and never could these grim wild beasts resist the spell, when we sang together with soft voice,

The giant is strong; but the fairy is wise:
And the clouds cannot wither the stars in the skies.

"Oh! well I remember," said her companion, "with what delight I first heard you sing that song. I fancied that, if I could only listen long enough to it, I should become as airy and gentle as ye are, and no longer be encumbered with this dark solid flesh. We were in that green chamber in the midst of red rocks, where the pines spread over the brinks of the precipices far above the mossy floor we sat on; and the vines hung their branches down the stony walls from the pine-boughs which they cling to on the summit, and drop their clusters into the smooth stream, with its floating water-lilies, which traverses the spot. There, dear sisters, were ye sporting, climbing up the vine-trails, and throwing yourselves headlong down, or lanching over the quick ripples of the stream. Ye had laid me on a bed of harebells; and I looked up with half-shut eyes. I saw your sparkling hosts pass to and fro up the cliff, through the straggling beams of sunshine; when something blacker than the pine-boughs on the summit appeared in the deepest of their shade. Long tangled locks, and two fierce round eyes, and a mouth with huge protruding lip, came on and peered over, till the monster spied me, and gave a yell. I saw a crag, with two young pine-trees growing on it, toppling before the thrust of his hand, and at the moment of falling to crush me. Then suddenly came your cry

and song. A sheet of water, thinner than a rose-leaf, and transparent as the starry sky, rose from the stream, and seemed to form an arch above me. There was in it a perpetual trembling and eddying of the brightest colours; and I saw the forms of thousands of my sisters, floating, circling, wavering up and down in the liquid light. All seemed joining in the song,—

> The giant is strong; but the fairy is wise:
> And the clouds cannot wither the stars in the skies.

The crag fell, but shattered not my crystal vault, down the side of which it rolled into the stream; and the giant, with a roar of rage, fell after it, and stung by the warm air, and pierced through and through by the music, and writhing in the bright stream, half melted, half was broken like a lump of ice, and darkened the water, while he flowed away in it."

"It was the frequency of such attempts however," said the fairy, "which drove us to take refuge in the regions of our friends, the dwarfs. We found too that we had no longer the mere risk of being surprised by our enemies in the sudden descent of storm and mists, and through the opportunities of thick and gloomy lurking-places near our sunlit haunts. They had discovered a secret, by which they could at will darken and deface our whole kingdom, and blight all its sweet flowers and fruitage. There is somewhere, in the centre of their mountains, in the

midst of desolate rocks, a black ravine. The upper end of it is enclosed by an enormous crag, which turns as on a pivot, and is the door of an immeasurable cave. The giants, hating our Sea-Child, and determined to drive her from the land, heaved with their pine-stem clubs at this great block of stone, until they had forced it open. Thence, so long as they had strength to hold it thus, a thick and chilling mist boiled out, poured down the glens and mountains, and stifled all our island. When they were so wearied with the huge weight that they could endure no longer, the rock swung to again and closed the opening; but not until the work was done for that time, and the land made wellnigh uninhabitable to thee and us. Then in the fearful gloom the giants rushed abroad, howling and trampling over high and low; and many were the devices we were compelled to use in order to preserve thee from their fury. We scattered the golden sea-sand, which had been transmuted by the sunbeams, over the softest greensward, and watered it with the dew shaken from musk-roses; and it grew up into a golden trelliswork, with large twining leaves of embossed gold, and fruits like bunches of stars. When thou hadst been sprinkled with the same dew, and so hushed into charmed sleep, we laid thee beneath the bowery roof, and kept watch around thee. The giants could not approach this spot; for it threw off the darkness,

and burnt in the midst of storm and fog with an incessant light. But still we were obliged to be perpetually on our guard; and we shivered and pined in the desolation of our beautiful empire. At last we resolved to try our fortunes in a new region. When we had lulled thee into deep slumber, we all glided down the waterfall that pours out of the lake of lilies, and sank with it deep into the ground. We were here in the kingdom of the dwarfs.

"The little people showed us as much friendship, as the giants had ever displayed of enmity. Their great hall had a thousand columns, each of a different metal, and with a capital of a different precious stone. The roof was opal, and the floor lapis-lazuli. In the centre stood a pillar, which seemed cut off at half its height. On it sat a dwarf, rather smaller than the others, but broad and strong. His dark and twisted face looked like a little copy of one of the giants; but his clear blue eyes were as beautiful as ours, or as thine, my Sea-Child. He sat with his arms folded, and his legs hung down and swinging. His head was turned to one side, and rather upwards; and on the tip of his nose spun perpetually a little golden circle, with a golden pin run through it, on which it seemed to dance unweariedly, turning round and round for ever, smooth and swift as an eddy in a stream. In its whirl the little circle gave out large flakes of

white fire, which formed a wheel of widening rings above the head of the dwarf, flashing off on all sides between the capitals of the pillars, and lighting the whole hall. The queer cunning look, with which the dwarf's blue eyes glanced up at the small spinner, as if it were alive, and answering his glances with its own, amused us much.

"The dwarfs, when we entered, were all placed round on ranges of seats rising above one another. Every seat was like a small pile of round plates of gold, each of them, as we afterwards found, having a head on it with some strange figures. These plates, the dwarfs told us, were all talismans, which would one day make the owners lords of the world. At the head of the hall, under a canopy of state, sat the king of the dwarfs, who looked wonderfully old and wise, with two eyes of ruby, and a long crystal tooth growing out of one side of his mouth, and a beard of gold-wire falling below his feet and twirled on the floor, going three times round the throne.

"'What seek ye?' said the King; and his words did not come out of his lips, but from a little hole in the top of his crystal tooth.

"'Help! necromancer.'

"'It belongeth rightly to the helpful, and shall not be denied you. What bring ye?'

"'A young Sea-Child.'

"'It is in the youngest that the oldest may see hope. She is welcome. What fear ye?'

"'The rage of the tall giants.'

"'We are deeper than they are high. I can protect you against them.'

"He rose up and walked before us; and his golden beard streamed behind over both his shoulders, and seemed to be a stately cloth woven with figures for us to walk on. There was darkness round us; and we advanced upon this shining path, following the dwarf, till suddenly he disappeared, and we found ourselves in the garden which thou hast dwelt in with us. Thou rememberest the still and glistening loveliness of the place; and of the moon that lighted it, and the sweet moonflowers that filled its glades, I need not speak. But thou knowest not what wise instruction the old dwarf king was wont to give us, while thou wert sleeping under the myrtle shade.

"'Mourn not,' he would say, 'fair sisters, that ye are driven from your upper land of life into this lower garden of peace.

"'All things are but as they must be; and, were they otherwise, they would not be the things they are.

"'Each worketh for itself, and doeth and knoweth all it can, save in so far as other things oppose it, which are also accomplishing their due tasks.

"'Each is but a portion of the whole, and vainly seeketh to be aught but that which the whole willeth it to be.

"'All,—that is, dwarfs, and giants, and fairies, and the world that holds them,—subsist in successions of strife, and, while they seem struggling to destroy each other, exert, as alone it is possible for them to do, the energies of their own being.

"'All rise out of death to life; and many are the semblances of death which still accompany their life at its highest. They grow into harmony only by discord with themselves and others, and, while they labour to escape the common lot, rebound painfully from the walls which they strive against idly.

"'The giant disturbeth, the fairy brighteneth, the dwarf enricheth the world. Each doeth well in his own work. But therein often must he thwart and cross the work of another.

"'I am oldest, I am wisest of workers in the world. I was at the birth of things; and what hath been I know well: but what is future I know not yet, nor can read whether there shall be a new birth of all that may bring death to me.'

"Thus did the old King teach us a sad yet melodious contentment, that seemed suited to that visionary garden. This quiet state however was not to last, nor the wisdom of the dwarfs to secure them happiness. We longed for our upper world of daylight and freedom; and thou seemedst rather dreaming than awake. Yet thou beamedst ever fairer and fairer, and didst grow in stature

and in loveliness. Thus was it that thou wert the occasion of our first difference with the dwarfs. Their King, so old, so wise, looked on thee ever with more joy and sadness; and at last he told us that he would fain have thee for his queen, to abide with him always in that secret lunar empire. Us too the other dwarfs appeared to love more than we wished; and we found that we must either leave their dominions, or consent to inhabit them for ever. We spake to the old King, and said, that for thee it would be a woful doom to see our native Faëry land no more; and we entreated him of his goodness and wisdom to enable us to dwell there without further peril. Ruby tears fell from his ruby eyes upon his golden beard as he turned away; and the faces of all Dwarfland were darkened.

"No long space seemed to have passed, before we were summoned again to the great hall, while thou wert left sleeping in the moon-garden. The King was on his throne; the dwarfs were seated round. But, instead of the pillars we had seen before, the metals now had all become transparent; and in the midst of each stood one of our enemies, the giants, with one heavy hand hung down, and clenched, as if in pain, and the other raised above his head, and sustaining the capital of the column. The small gold plate with its gold pin still spun incessantly on the nose; the blue eyes still watched it cunningly; the flakes

of fire streamed off and flew between the pillars, and scorched the faces and brown-red shoulders of the giants. Our enemies grinned and writhed when they saw us, but seemed unable to utter any sound. The dwarfs also did not speak; but the King rose and moved before us. His beard fell over his shoulders, and formed a path on which which we walked. We proceeded on and on, till the Dwarfland seemed changing, and daylight fell faintly upon us. The King grew more and more like the stones and trees around; and at last, we knew not how, instead of his figure before us, there was only a cleft in the rock, nearly of the same shape. The golden beard was now a track of golden sands, such as we had often seen before, with the bright sunshine falling on it. We were again in our own world of Faëry. But oh, dear Sea-Child! I cannot say the grief that smote us when we missed thee. We wailed and drooped; and even the delights of our land could do nothing to console us, till we found thee sleeping in a grotto of diamond and emerald, which recalled the treasures of the dwarfs to us. Even now we were not happy; for we remembered a prophecy of the old man, that, though he might restore us to our home, and rescue us from the giants, short would be our enjoyment of thee whom we had refused him."

The companions embraced anew; and the fairy hung round her friend like a rainbow on

a smooth green hill. The fairies now poured in on all sides, singing and exulting in their own land, though not without a thought of grief from the dwarf's prophecy. The sun was hanging over the sea, and gilding the shore; and they looked at the bright waters, and marked the spot where they had first discerned the Sea-Child's swimming cradle. Lo! there was again a speck. A floating shape appeared, and came nearer and nearer. It looked a living thing. Soon it touched the shore; and they saw a figure like that of the Sea-Child, but taller and stronger and bolder, and in a stately dress. The fairies said in their hearts, It is a man! Them he seemed not to see, but only her. She was frightened, but with a mixture of gladness at his appearance, and was trembling and nigh to sink, when he took her in his arms, and spake to her of hope and joy.

"I am come from distant lands upon this strange adventure, warned in dreams, and by aërial voices, and by ancient lays, that here I should find my bride, and the queen of my new dominions."

He too was beautiful, and of a sweet voice; and she heard him with more fear than pain. When she looked around, she no longer saw the fairies near. There were gleams floating over the landscape, and quivering in the woods, and a song of sweet sorrow, so sweet, that, as it died away, it left the sense of an eternal peace.

Thus did the land of England receive its first inhabitants. Ever since has it been favoured by the fairies; the dwarfs have enriched it secretly; and the giants have upborne its foundations upon their hands, and done it huge though sullen service.

THE ONYX RING.

From Blackwood's Magazine for 1838, *with corrections by the Author.*

CHAPTER I.

IT was on the afternoon of a summer day, that Arthur Edmonstone, a young barrister, left his chambers in the Temple, and walked to the north-eastern part of London, where a whole region of human life exists never heard of in fashionable society. He at last reached an obscure and squalid street, where the doors of most of the houses stood half open for the convenience of the lodgers. Through one of these entrances he passed, and mounted three flights of stairs, till he reached a small closed door, at which he tapped. A low voice said, "Come in;" and he entered the room. It was small and dim, and was nearly filled by a pallet-bed, on which lay a woman. She was covered with a loose and tattered wrapper, through which her wasted figure was plainly to be traced. Her small and pleasing features were flushed with a deep red. She raised her blue eyes as Arthur entered, and said she was sorry to have given him the trouble of coming to see her; but she added that she was too unwell to go to him.

"I am very glad to come to you. But tell me who you are, and what you want with me?"

"I am a farmer's daughter. Your old schoolfellow, Henry Richards, became acquainted with me in the country; and at last he persuaded me to go away with him and be privately married; for his friends would give him no encouragement in such a matter, any more than mine would help me. Ah! sir, that disobedience of mine was the root of all our misery! We came to London; and he tried to support himself by writing things to be printed; and so we managed pretty well for some time. But at last too much confinement and overwork made him ill, and,—I beg pardon, sir, for crying,—he died just before my baby was born. He told me at the last, that he did not know any one who would help me, unless it were my own friends, or an old schoolfellow of his; and then he wrote your name and direction. It was three months ago; and I have gone on as well as I could ever since. But it is a hard thing to live, sir, in this world, without friends. And I was ill myself; and three days ago my baby died; and I could not get it buried without help. There's the coffin that I bought with the money you sent me."

Arthur looked, and saw the little coffin in a dim corner opposite to where the woman lay. She went on: "I asked a neighbour to write to you; for I was still ashamed to send to my friends; and besides they are too far off. God bless you, sir,—God bless you,—for coming to see me."

"Shall I not see about the funeral?"

"Oh! would you, sir? I have no money; and, if I had, I am too weak to go about it myself."

In half an hour Arthur returned with the necessary help, and then followed the little corpse to its last resting-place. He afterwards went back to the mother, talked to her for a considerable time about her husband and child, provided her with money, and advised her, as soon as she should be able, to write to her family and ask for their forgiveness. He found her perfectly disposed to do so, though her own life, she believed, would last only a few days. But the Bible, she said, had become more and more her comfort; and she now wished for nothing but to do her duty according to the principles of the Gospel.

Arthur left her, intending soon to see her again, and returned to his chambers. Another dreary picture, he thought, from the great funereal gallery of life. For years I have lost sight of Richards; and on how melancholy a tombstone do I now read his epitaph! On all hands the world shows nothing but disappointment and wretchedness; and it is from the very extremity of misery that we endeavour to extort some hope for the future, fancying that the worst must change to a better, and drawing alleviation from the enormity of our distress, as a

man warms himself for a moment by kindling the wreck of his house which has been swept away.

Chapter II.

THAT evening a great square in the western part of London rattled with carriages. Many well-known names went sounding up the staircase of one of its largest houses. The spacious rooms were full of people, glittering under the clear light; and there was a lively uproar of music, dancing, and conversation. There were of course many beautiful women present, who appeared for the most part animated and gratified; but one, to some eyes the fairest of them all, sat retired, and evidently wishing to avoid observation. The simplicity of her dress, and the quiet thoughtfulness of her countenance were in accordance with the position she had chosen. The serene and expressive character of her beauty was heightened by the mode in which her shining black hair was knotted at the back of the head, and suited the perfect and full regularity of her figure, and the gracefulness of her neck and shoulders. But there was a look of reflection and feeling in the face, such as of old would hardly have been assigned to any nymph or goddess. Two or three people were engaged in conversation with her;

and among them stood Sir Charles Harcourt, a rather young and very wealthy baronet, with high pretensions to taste and refinement. They were joined in a few minutes by a young man, pale, and with dark hair and eyes, and a look of suppressed excitement, who bowed, blushed, and asked her to dance with him. She too blushed, though much more slightly, and assented; and in the course of the next quarter of an hour the following dialogue passed between them, though often interrupted by the changes of the dance, or the nearness of those who were not meant to hear what passed.

"Miss Lascelles,—for you will not let me call you Maria,—you seemed much interested in Sir Charles Harcourt's conversation: perhaps you regret that I withdrew you from it?"

"No indeed; he never interests me much. He was talking about pictures; and he has collected a great deal of information on the subject: but I do not generally approve of his taste; or at least it differs very often from mine. One cannot help rather liking him; for he is very good-natured and well-bred."

"Why do you not add, very rich and fashionable?"

"Because riches and fashion have but slight charms for me, as I fancied, Mr. Edmonstone, that you must know."

"Once at least I too thought so: but, as one is

deceived in so many other things, why not in that?"

"Now you must feel that you are unjust; and I need not answer you."

"Do you consider, Miss Lascelles, to what miserable suspense and agitation our present position exposes me?"

"I do not know why you should complain, more than I. Surely my relation to my uncle and aunt is as anxious and unhappy as anything you have to suffer. All suspense will be ended, if you will let me inform them of what has passed between us, and will abide by their decision."

"That, you well know, would at once extinguish every hope."

"What then can I say? Often and bitterly have I repented that I ever let you surprise me into an acknowledgement of my feelings. But, as I went so far astray, I must now only insist, either that you agree to my confessing the truth, or that you never speak to me again but in the language of a friend,—at least, until better times."

"And can you promise me when those will come?"

"Surely that must depend upon yourself, or at least not on me. If your industry in your profession raises your worldly prospects, it may be possible that my relations will listen, not perhaps

with approbation, but with acquiescence, to our, —to your wishes."

"And if years pass away in the mean time, and you continue to frequent such scenes as these, and daily to meet the rich and the noble, is it not possible that at the end of those years I may see you the wife of another."

The lady's cheek now flushed; and she cast a sudden look at her partner, and then turned slightly away, and was silent. A few moments afterwards she said: "I am wrong to feel indignant at your question, when I remember the instances I have seen of faithlessness in man and woman. But I will still ask you, if you think my willingness to remain in my present painful and almost unworthy position is to go for nothing with you? Is it not some evidence of stronger feeling than any which your present hasty discontent indicates? I would rather however not ask you this, but beg you to say no more to me on the subject. I must bear my lot as I can; and you have in yours the inestimable blessing that you can hope to improve it by your own exertion."

They were now obliged to separate. Miss Lascelles occupied her former seat, and, when asked to dance by some one else, declined on the plea of fatigue. Arthur looked dissatisfied and unhappy, and walked into another room out of

her sight. But soon after she again saw him one of a group of four or five persons engaged in eager conversation, of whom he appeared the most earnest. She watched the play of his fine and intelligent, but restless features, and fancied she could hear the words that accompanied the changes of his countenance. Had a deaf physiognomist seen him, he must at once have exclaimed, "That is an eloquent man!" Image after image, she well knew by the looks of his companions as well as his own, were gushing and sparkling from him; and she could almost divine the wide and picturesque views of art and history and nature and individual life which he was suggesting or illustrating. But in his intervals of silence there was a look of sadness and bewilderment about him; and he stood at last apparently in reverie and indecision; till, with a mournful glance towards Maria, he passed to the door, as if departing from the house.

In the mean time a lady, who had been one of those conversing with him, came to Miss Lascelles, and said: "Dear Maria, I do wish you had been with me. Mr. Edmonstone has been more brilliant than ever. I am sure to-night even you, who admire so few people, must have admired him."

"I thought I admired a great many people. But what was he speaking of?"

"Well, perhaps you do. But at least there are so many things which everybody else is delighted

with, that you do not care for. Quite lately, you know, there were the Siamese Twins, and the man who played upon his chin, and the Hungarian Count who improvised the neighings and the words of command and the trumpets of a regiment of cavalry all at once. I thought it was quite acknowledged that you are so fastidious."

"And which of these exhibitions was it, that Mr. Edmonstone's conversation most reminded you of? Was it the chin-thumping, or the neighing? or was it perhaps the Siamese Twins?"

"Don't now, Maria," said the lady; "I am sure you know what I mean. But you are so provoking." And she proceeded in her own way to give an account of what Arthur had said.

Chapter III.

In the mean time, although it was still comparatively early in the evening, Arthur returned to his chambers. When he had shut himself in his small, gloomy room, the impression of the scene he had left still remained with him. The lively, graceful figures danced in fragments along the dim wall; and bright eyes seemed looking at him out of the backs of the books in the dingy bookcase. But Maria came to him the most vividly, and stayed the longest. He gazed at the vacant space, and

saw the simple and classical knot of glossy black hair, with its one pale flower which so well became the high smooth forehead. Again he saw the quiet expressive features, in which the eyes and lips appeared so full of intelligent and benignant meaning. The fully formed and graceful person was no less present to him. Yet of what avail, he thought, are her many lovely and delightful qualities to me? Had I the fortune which I want, or the rank which on any other account I would not accept, I might gain the consent of her relatives and guardians. But now what must I look to? Years of irksome, worthless labour in the dreariest of human studies; and then, when life has become empty and unjoyous, and both our hearts are chilled and closed, the remnant of me may perhaps be united to all that will remain of Maria. O for the free and passionate life of nature and poetry and love! Meanwhile I must only now and then approach her, like an evil spirit afraid to draw near to some holy being. Or I must attempt to forget her and myself, in the vain display of talents, which, as I am placed, are useless for the true ends of life; and I must chew my own disgust at the vanity, which, while I speak, makes me derive pleasure from my own choice words and sparkling fancies, and from the wonder these excite in others. A door, nearly opposite to him, into another room, stood open; and looking up he saw the faint moonlight fall

through the window. In this dull light it seemed to him that a figure was standing, with eyes raised towards the heavens, with tears faintly gleaming on her cheeks, and her hands crossed meekly and plaintively on her bosom. It was still Maria; but, before a minute had passed, the form and features melted softly into those of the dying woman whom he had visited that morning. She too grew fainter and fainter, and seemed to mount in the moonlight towards the sky.

He turned sadly away, and, looking round, saw a paper on the table which he did not know of. He opened it, and found a bill for a considerable sum which had long been due. A literary undertaking, which would have supplied him with the means of discharging the debt, had been neglected for weeks, while he dreamt and fretted over his fate; and now he knew not whither to turn. To divert his thoughts, he took up an old book of Necromancy, which he had been examining, and read a few pages full of strange transformations and forgotten spells; but nothing interested him till he came to the following passage. "Of a truth there be many potent and secret arts born of the wits of wise men, more than they have thought good to divulgate through the world, as doubting of the discretion of purblind mortals in exercising such a right. Of which inference doubtless, shrewd reasons may be noted in the use, say rather, the most blunt, profane,

and quadrupedal abuse, of their present small and poor prerogatives, by mankind perpetrated and customary. Thus I doubt not to affirm, such truths in the main ocean of time lie buried and drowned, or may from thence, by brave and constant divers, hereafter pearl-wise be fished up, as would change the whole order and groundplot of men's lives, no less than a great and polite king changes the compass and fashion of the barbarous castles and pavilions in some strange city, by him invaded and subdued. Thus, by the manner of example, may perhaps spells, charms, and amulets be discovered, if not in the Eastern people now frequent, to turn dust to gold, vinegar to nectar, clay and sordes to orient jewels, of dead and mouldered stumps to make fruits grow divine and unmatchable. What know I? In a word, to make money plentiful as men's modes of spending it; to sheathe lightnings even as we sheathe Toledo-blades, and again draw them to the confusion of the enemies of our lord the king (whom God preserve!); to turn one man into another, or into many. And herewith perhaps, when that seal of Solomon is found again, and worn, where it would best become, on the hand of our dread and bounteous sovereign, to purge gross matter to spirit, and to make angels of men; even as of grubs and worms come forth butterflies, and of noisome smoke and ashes the divine and Paradisaical Phœnix is begotten and proceedeth.

But may those who attain to such skill of arts, ever judiciously and temperately practise and adumbrate their parts and wisdom, even as shall here be done, not openly and popularly declaring, but rather keeping the light of too resplendent truth in due films and veils concealed."

When he had read this grotesque passage twice, he opened his window and looked out. The stars were visible in the small spot of sky within his survey; and there was still a faint light from the moon. The night was calm; and he descended from his room, and walked about the court. Here his former thoughts returned, and mixed themselves in fantastic combination with the strange magical images he had been engaged by. Why, he mused, as he raised his head, and looked above the old round tower of the Temple Church,—why should that which we so much desire be placed beyond our reach? Is our nature an endless contradiction? If I long so to change my lot, why has not the system of things, that gave me this longing, also given me the power to gratify it? And then, not believing the fancy he indulged in, he began to paint the destiny he would select, if he had the power of choice. At last he asked himself the fatal question,—If I could thus change myself and all about me, should I not lose Maria's love, which is given to me, and not to any such figure as I might wish to assume?

At this moment his reflections were broken by

an unexpected sound. It seemed to him that he heard a faint sad note from the organ in the church. He listened; and it sounded again, sadder, but more distinct. He walked round to the door, but now heard nothing; and after a minute or two he was about to depart, when the note sounded for the third time. The deep, low arch, with its pillar-work and Gothic sculpture, was close to him. He pushed the door: it opened at his touch, and, as he made a step forward into the dim, empty space, slipped from his hand and closed behind him. At this moment the clock struck twelve. The building is now used only as a vestibule to the larger church beyond, but is in itself curious and venerable, and contains the tombs of several knights in armour, with their legs crossed. There was no sound audible but his own footsteps as he walked across the wide area, and again turned. While he paced the pavement, his confused and wavering thoughts pursued him still. At last he exclaimed, half-aloud, "If so much of pain and self-reproach clings to this miserable identity of mine, why cannot I cast it off, and migrate into some new form of being?"

"You can!" answered a low clear voice, apparently close at hand.

Arthur staggered two or three paces back, and, looking round, saw an old man in a long dress, the form of which was not distinctly visible,

while his white head and venerable features stood out in the twilight like those of a saint in some early German picture. So have the more ancient artists often represented Joseph, the husband of Mary.

"Would you"—he said, in a sweet but melancholy voice—"in truth accept the power of exchanging your own personal existence at pleasure for that of other men?"

After a moment's pause, he answered boldly, "Yes."

"I can bestow the power, but only on these conditions. You will be able to assume a new part in life once in every week. For the one hour after midnight on each Saturday, that is, for the first hour of the new week, you will remember all that you have been, and whatever characters you may have chosen for yourself. At the end of the hour, you may make a new choice; but, if then deferred, it will again be a week before the opportunity will recur. You will also be incapable of revealing to any one the power you are gifted with. And if you once resume your present being, you will never again be able to cast it off. If on these terms you agree to my proposal, take this ring, and wear it on the forefinger of your right hand. It bears the head of the famous Apollonius of Tyana. If you breathe on it at the appointed hour, you will immediately become any person you may desire to be, of those

existing in the age you live in, who in this age are alone possible."

Arthur hesitated, and said, "Before I assent to your offer, tell me whether you would think me wise to do so."

"Young man, were I to choose again, my choice would be to fill the situation where nature brought me forth, and where God therefore doubtless designed me to work. If you accept my ring, it must be used this night; or it will vanish from your hand. If not, return to your dwelling, and devote yourself to the duties which your present state imposes on you."

Arthur remembered his desolate chamber, the hopeless manuscript and unpaid bills, and the melancholy image of Maria, whom he could not hope to make his own for years. He held out his hand, received the ring, and placed it on his finger.

The night was now so dark, that he could hardly see the old man. But he heard the words, "Remember, if the present hour passes before you have made your choice, you will lose for ever the privilege you have obtained."

Arthur was now alone, in mournful perplexity, overpowered by the strangeness of the event. But he felt the ring upon his finger, and knew that he was not dreaming. The moments flew on and on; and the quarter had struck twice since he received the ring, so that few minutes

of the hour remained. At last he began to consider that he must come to some determination. But when he endeavoured to decide what he should do, what character he should assume, a thousand images seemed floating before him, none of them distinct enough to secure his preference. He fancied that all the shapes he had ever seen flowing along the neighbouring streets, were now with him in the old church. But he could bring no one more vividly before his eyes than another. At length a single figure separated itself from the crowd, he knew not how or why. He regarded it with a mingled feeling of envy and dislike. But at this moment he heard the preparatory jarring of the clock; and, feeling spell-bound to use the ring, he raised his hand towards his face. The onyx head glowed with a spark of fire in the darkness; and, while he breathed on it, and in a tremulous whisper pronounced the name of Sir Charles Harcourt, the sound of the clock thrilled away. At the same instant Arthur Edmonstone ceased to be conscious of existence.

Chapter IV.

SIR Charles Harcourt was a man arrived at about half the term of threescore years and ten, but appeared rather younger than his age. He was of middle size and pleasing appearance,

with features more regular than expressive, and an air of much ease and politeness. Taste and refinement had been the business of his life. His large fortune had been chiefly employed in the enjoyment and accumulation of elegant luxuries. His house was admirably arranged and beautifully furnished; his pictures and other works of art always costly and striking, if not always of the deepest significance. The regularity and completeness of his whole establishment and habits were noted even among the British aristocracy. His parties were the highest models of good-breeding and cultivated relaxation, combined with splendour. In the manner of the host, with a perpetual self-consciousness that gave something of coldness and reserve, there was also an unfailing self-command, and earnest though smooth concern for others, which, even if regarded as acting, such as from its unvarying consistency it could hardly be, was in its kind very attractive. It was not the elevated, the humane, not even the beautiful, that he unceasingly aimed at realizing; but as much of all these as might be necessary to render him the most popular, admired, and flattered leader of English society. Every one felt in his company as if in a well-proportioned and lighted gallery, surrounded with graceful and harmonious objects. Only to the few did it occur that there could be anything wanting to render the gallery a home.

On the next day but one after he met Miss Lascelles at the ball, he left London for his country-seat, where he had invited a party of friends to join him and his sister, and Maria among them. Beechurst was a stately Elizabethan building, having family recollections, spaciousness, convenience, dignity, picturesqueness, and the look of a peaceful and loved abode for man. It was surrounded by a large park, of broken surface and noble timber, traversed by a swift, sparkling stream. There was beauty in its long avenues of elm and horse-chesnut, in its woods of oak and knolls of beeches, in the smooth expanses of verdure, and the colouring of the elevations adorned with fern and heath and pale-flowered broom, and golden-tinted furze. Swans moved upon the river, and antlered herds beneath the foliage. About the house were terraces with flights of stairs, and fountains with quaint figures, and a profusion of the finest flowers. A large old-fashioned garden, which ran along one side of the building, contained cypresses, cedars, and plane-trees of great age, and beds of rich bloom, surrounding bronze or marble statues, and divided by walks of velvet green. Within the house were great galleries, halls, and chambers, gorgeous with antique furniture, and a large collection of pictures, to which had been added whatever of graceful and commodious modern art devises.

In the evening of the day on which Sir Charles arrived at Beechurst, several of his guests also reached it. They were persons of very different kinds. The most remarkable of them were Walsingham, an exquisite, rather than a very popular poet, and Hastings, a traveller who had visited almost every part of the world. With these were two or three artists and men of letters, as many young men of rank and fortune, and a few ladies, friends, or whom she chose to call so, of Miss Harcourt, Sir Charles's sister. Among these was Maria Lascelles, who came under the care of her aunt, Mrs. Nugent. Her mother had been sister to Mr. Nugent; and Mrs. Nugent was a cousin of Sir Charles Harcourt. The Mount, where the Nugents lived, was but a few miles from Beechurst.

Maria looked with a good deal of curiosity at Walsingham and Hastings, whom she had never seen before, except in large societies. The poet was a man of middle age and memorable appearance, with a face at once calm, thoughtful, refined, and elevated. He was not so remarkable for the grace of manner, which is spontaneous and the result of the whole character and structure, as for self-conscious dignity. The changes of his countenance were not rapid; and the signs of emotion were few and slight. His conversation was ready, finished, universal; and a cultivated person could scarcely see him without

receiving an impression of the utmost height and fulness of mental accomplishment. Everybody admitted that he said all that they had a right to hear, and even gave them images and thoughts of which they had little previous conception. But almost all felt that between the inner man and them there was a medium of massive ice; and from this very cause he had the greater power of alluring and fascinating, by free and spontaneous movements, the few, chiefly women, with whom he had ever chosen to appear on terms of sympathy. His poems were pre-eminently clear and rounded, delineating innumerable shapes of beauty chosen from all nature and life. But they dealt with the painful, the austere, and the sublime, only so far as these could be subdued and brightened to the purposes of art. Nay, even his own existence seemed constructed on the same principle. He had apparently cut off whatever elements of ampler and more awful being, he could not, as an artist and a worker in outward life, thoroughly comprehend, rise above, and control at will. He seemed frivolous only to the gravely trivial.

To him Hastings in some things afforded a pleasant contrast. He was a man on whom twenty years of hardship and adventure sat lightly and cheerfully. His set, alert figure suited well with his lively, shrewd countenance. His conversation was in a great degree made up

of common remarks upon uncommon things and people; and, where he had only common objects to deal with, commonest of the common were all his views and feelings. But when he spoke of the Brazilian forests, the Steppes of Tartary, or the plains of Caffraria, the topic gave an interest which would never have arisen from the speaker. Light-hearted courage and good-humoured kindliness had been the ostrich wings to help him smoothly over the world. By profession a sailor, and still holding a lieutenant's commission, he had spent the long intervals of his service in travelling. He had been present in the same year at the levees of the American President and the Persian Schah, and had made the Pope laugh by an anecdote which he had picked up a few weeks before in a Turkman tent. In every land he had made friends of all he lived amongst, and even seemed to have formed an amicable acquaintance with the beasts and plants, and the very aspect of the different countries. He knew something of natural history, and had a collection of curiosities, some of which, as they happened to fall under his hand, he would carry with him for a week or two, wherever he might be, and then lock them up again in some huge sea-chest for another imprisonment of years. Men he knew superficially, but on many sides, and dealt with them by instinctive readiness and good-fellowship, rather

than from any systematic views. No man moved more lightly within his own limits; but no limits could be more definite or impassable; and though they embraced the five regions of the globe, and all its seas, they were still narrow. All men however derived pleasure from so clear, self-possessed, and bright a presence. He was to many a cordial against that melancholy, which he had never felt; for the first shadow of it drove him on new undertakings; and fresh scenes and objects were to him always delightful.

Of the rest of the company, Maria found none so noticeable. Some had carried their peculiar technical talent up to considerable skill; but the man had dwindled in the workman. Others appeared to have merged their whole individual characters in habit and social position. In the best, what there was of genuine and large did not come so prominently on the surface as to be discernible by a rapid glance.

Chapter V.

ON the day after their arrival at Beechurst, Sir Charles Harcourt rode with Maria, and two or three other persons, through the park, into the wildest of its forest scenery. The shifting vistas, broken openings, and deep recesses afforded an

ever varying interest. One or other was perpetually calling the attention of the rest to the rough baronial boldness of some huge old stem,—to the graceful outline and noble branchings of some mature, still undecaying tree,—to the full and splendid colourings of the foliage. An artist, who was with them, often tried to mark out some view into a distinct and framed picture. Walsingham too entered eagerly into this study, but often also spoke to Maria, in a strain she better sympathized with, of the artificial, technical character of all such attempts, and how they confess our incapacity to apprehend and represent the unity of nature as a whole, and so endeavour to impress a fictitious unity on some smaller and more manageable part. She was full of enjoyment, and said that a forest was to her imperishable fairy-land.

After a ride of an hour, they passed out of the enclosed park and woodland, and came through a deep green flowery lane to the edge of a common covered with furze and heath, where they saw a small but very neat farm-house, with its farm-buildings close about it, overshadowed by three or four old elms, and appearing the ancient abode of quiet prosperity. Maria was so pleased at the sight, that Sir Charles proposed to visit the farmer, who was his tenant; and they were soon at the gate of the little garden in front of the house. Under the guidance of their host, they

went straight into the kitchen. Wilson, the farmer, had come in from the fields, and was sitting in his brown arm-chair, while his wife was preparing dinner. The man was dark-complexioned, spare, and tall, with a keen and honest look, which gained strength and character from a certain twist of the face, drawing one eyebrow somewhat up, as well as one side of his firm mouth. The wife looked clean and kind; and in both, the ease and decision of manner, with which they received their landlord and his companions, were remarkable. Sir Charles, when out shooting, had often visited them, and now asked for their only son, James, who had not yet come in from work, but was said to be quite well. Maria spoke quietly and good-naturedly to the woman, who answered her with sufficient intelligence, till the visitors were all surprised by the entrance of a young woman from another room. She was a tall and handsome country-girl, in her common dark dress, with her arms bared, and looking as if she had come straight from the dairy. Sir Charles asked who she was, as he did not remember to have seen her; and the farmer said she was an orphan niece, who had lately come to live with them. Ann blushed all over, when she saw the unexpected company; and when the blush subsided, she had a deep and bright red complexion, which in her was pleasing, though in a lady it would hardly have been admired. Her rather

square face however was regularly formed; and her dark eyes and hair, white teeth, and look of good-humour and simplicity, made her very pleasing. Every one looked at her with a smile, and Maria with the kindliest goodwill and admiration. The landlord first spoke to her, and said he hoped she liked Burntwood.

"Yes, sir, very much; uncle and aunt are very good to me."

"And, I am sure," he said, laughing, "James is equally good to you."

"Yes, sir;" and the girl coloured and looked down.

"Well, you must not be ungrateful to him for his kindness, you know."

Maria rendered an answer unnecessary by asking for a glass of water, which the girl went for; and before she returned, James came in. He was an active, well-tempered, and lively-looking man, with less appearance of hard strength than his father,—for he had not had so much to fight against,—but a face and manner that were sure signs of truth and affectionateness.

"That scene," said Walsingham, after they were all on horseback again, "is a complete Idyl. There are people whose aspect and manner give one at once so satisfying an image of active, cheerful life, in perfect harmony with their circumstances, that one feels, to enlarge the sphere or their minds would be to spoil the whole;

and if you suppose both changed, it becomes not an altered, but a totally different thing. Those people, without knowing it, are a perfect representation of nature and life, so long as they do not attempt to be anything other than what they are. The mere limits of the family mark them out as distinctly as a poet could desire; and at the same time they are in constant living combination with all the world in which they act, and with a whole human neighbourhood. But if you tried to make them reflect more widely, or to feel more earnestly, you would introduce confusion and anxiety among them."

"If all there," said Maria, "be as peaceful as it looks, I cannot imagine it to have become and continued so, except by means of religious faith and principle; and surely no feelings or reflections of any other kind could raise them so high as that."

"Probably," replied Walsingham, "their faith is a mere dutiful, warm-hearted acquiescence in things that they as little understand, as if their Bible were still in Hebrew and Greek. And well for them that it is so. What vain self-upbraidings and fears, and images of fancied good and evil, would press on and destroy their quiet hearts, if you could awaken self-consciousness in them, and make them dream of conversions, beatitudes, and perditions!"

Maria looked down, and spoke in a low voice,

but very earnestly, while she said: "Surely, however little they may understand their faith, it must, if they have it at all, be essentially the same, and produce the same fruits in their hearts as in the most intelligent and expanded Christians."

Maria blushed deeper and deeper while saying this; for she felt herself engaged unawares in a dispute with one of the most celebrated of her contemporaries. But he only answered, with a bland smile: "I fear we often deceive ourselves by using the same word for very different things; and perhaps *faith* is one of them. In a wise man it means knowledge, in a foolish one ignorance." He then turned to Sir Charles, and asked him if he could tell them anything of the history of the family.

"I have been thinking," he replied, "how little we can trust appearances, such as those which you and Miss Lascelles have been talking of. So far are the Wilson family from the quiet and happy existence you imagined, they met with a domestic misfortune little more than a year ago, which seemed likely to kill both the father and mother. Besides the son whom you saw, they had an only daughter,—a small, delicate-looking, pretty, blue-eyed girl. She seemed only eighteen or nineteen, but, I believe, was in reality of age, when she became acquainted with a young man who was private tutor in

a family in the neighbourhood. After a few months' acquaintance she was persuaded to go off with him. It was said that they were secretly married; but from that time to this nothing has been heard of either of them."

"Ah!" said Walsingham; "I dare say he talked sentiment and speculation to her, and turned her head with the uncongenial element. Had she fallen in love with a farmer's son, who had never thought beyond his calling, no harm could have happened."

Maria said nothing, but she thought,—Had she been a person of religious principle, she would not have defied her parents in such a matter, nor run the risk of breaking their hearts; and religion might have enlarged her mind as effectually as her lover's philosophy.

Chapter VI.

THE afternoon of the following day was so rainy, that none of the party could leave the house; and several of them were assembled in the large and noble library. Walsingham talked to Maria, and evidently felt much pleasure in drawing out her clear and strong sense for all that had lain within her sphere. At first she had been a little afraid of him; for genius is a power which, till we become familiar with it,

has something that disturbs, nay repels, as well as fascinates. But she possessed herself too deeply for this to last, and was too open to all higher impressions, not to be won by his calm and manifold expressiveness.

Miss Constable, who was near, then said: "How tiresome this rain is! I wish one could have a world without rain!"

A man of science, who was standing by, immediately began to explain learnedly, how impossible this would be, without changing all the other characters of the globe as to its atmosphere and productions.

Walsingham turned smiling to Maria and said; "In truth we can form no complete and consistent picture of any other state of existence than this, nor construct the ideal of any fairer world."

"Do you think this state of existence complete and consistent? It seems to me full of endless contradictions?"

"Our business here is precisely that of removing or reconciling these, and rounding off our life into as smooth and large a circle as possible."

"I cannot get over the feeling that the work is hopeless here, and that we can never be at peace but by trying to grow out of our natural state into a totally different and far higher and purer one."

"But can you form any distinct image of such a state, with all its suitable outward accompaniments? They must be only fragments and shadows of what we see about us here. One swallow, you know, does not make a summer; nor will one picture of an angel with white wings and a diamond crown fill up the notion of an eternal heaven."

"Perhaps we cannot frame any such ideal as you speak of. I am sure I cannot. But on the other hand there is surely in human nature a want of a higher life than that of mere labour and pleasure. We cannot say exactly in what forms that life, if it were all in all, would clothe itself. But it would be misery and despair to give up the hope of it."

"I believe that whatever it really promises of good, is attainable now by due cultivation, and that too in a real world, which perfectly suits us, and which we may daily better understand, rule, and embellish."

"I cannot even wish to subdue the longing after a blessedness, for which this world affords no adequate image and no congenial home."

"I fear it is this vague longing for that which we can do nothing to realize, that renders all our efforts uncertain, sad, and fruitless. Believe that here, on this earth, is our true heaven; and we can make it so. Thus too only can we escape all the inward struggle and convulsion

between the inevitable Actual and a Possible never to be attained."

"No doubt you would cut the knot then: but is there not still a thread which unites us to the hope, vague and colourless as it is, of a nobler being in a more appropriate scene?"

"Be it so," said Walsingham, with his tranquil smile. "For my part I only hope at present that you will not send me away from you, to look for any happier ideal position. I am contented where I am."

Maria too smiled faintly, but said nothing. After a pause Walsingham, who had looked down as if in thought, went on; "In fact by our careless indolence we lose the advantages we might enjoy; and at the same time we dream of those which are impossible. We will not walk, because it is less trouble to dream of flying. No wonder we make little of our lives compared with their capacities, when so few ever consider of what they are capable. The world we live in is to most of us so mean, dim, and narrow, that it would seem as if our sight would serve us for no better purpose than the blind man's string and dog, namely, to keep us out of ponds and ditches."

Here Miss Harcourt exclaimed, "Dear me! what strange ideas! I am sure they would never have struck me."

Hastings had been listening for some minutes

to the conversation, which he now took up thus: "For my part, I am of Miss Lascelles's mind. I confess I think one always feels the want of a change after a few weeks' residence in one place; and I suppose, when I have seen all the islands of the Pacific,—by the way, I mean to go there next week,—I shall want to embark for one of the planets, or take a flight to the moon."

"I hope," said one of the younger men, "if you imitate Astolpho in that, you will not bring back any of the foolish brains that are kept there. We have enough here."

"Perhaps," said Sir Charles, "you would at last be tired there, and wish yourself once more in England. Now I am content to begin by staying here."

Hastings answered: "I know no country I tire of so soon as England. All the bold fresh character of men is worn away by conventional refinement; and life is smothered under a heap of comforts. One learns something by lying in wait among the rocks, with a rifle in one hand, and an Indian chief as companion, when a herd of a thousand bisons rush over the plain to the banks of some great river, and beast after beast, squadron after squadron, plunge with a crash, and swim to fresh pastures; or when, in the wide solitude, one finds the hut of some Indian girl, perhaps the last survivor of her tribe, who has escaped from the

massacre, and lived for a year alone on the animals she has trapped, singing, while she sews their skins into clothes, some melancholy song of the old days; or when one falls in at some haunt of Asiatic horsemen with an old hermit, who has lived as a devotee perhaps for sixty or seventy years, and, lifting his eyelids with his fingers to look at you, thinks the first European he sees must be some spirit, whom he has met with before in a previous state of existence; when perhaps too the next hour you have to fight your way with a troop of Kurds through an ambush of robbers, and must ride for twenty-four hours without stopping, with your hand on your pistol, if you would escape alive."

Walsingham said quietly: "You stated that one learns something in this way. Pray, what does one learn?"

"Oh, no school-learning perhaps! but one gets new notions and images into one's head. You know the world better, and mankind, and what yourself can endure and do."

"Perhaps all this may be learned more accurately and deeply in the midst of our ordinary life, if we will only keep our eyes open, and be always striving and shaping. As to endurance, a life of action among men will always bring sufficient trial,—most perhaps to the mind, where least to the muscles."

"Ah, so be it for those who like it. I am

never so cheerful and so much at ease, as when there is danger in the way, and enterprise and novelty to lead me on. It does not seem worth while to take all the pains you speak of about so commonplace an existence as ours is here."

"Surely no existence is commonplace to him who lives with uncommon aims. The meanest work, carried on with insight and hope, with a feeling of the Beautiful, and with reference to the Whole, of which we are parts, becomes large and important. Sophocles writing his tragedy, and the flame by the light of which he saw to write, each was working in its vocation. But if the lamp had flared about, and set the tragedy on fire, and then the house, it had better been extinguished at first. All that is essential in romance, lies diffused throughout ordinary life, which, for those who live worthily, culminates to creative art. A dew-drop is water as fresh as Hippocrene or Niagara."

"'It is no amusement to me to play at taking brass counters for gold."

"Ay, but what if we could turn them to purer gold than ever came from the mine? Would it not be better worth while to stay at home and learn that art, than to spend years in gathering yellow sand, and find perhaps at last that it is worthless? Children hoard counters as if they were coin. But men too often throw away the true coin as if they were counters."

Several of the company had now gathered round the little group. Sir Charles was pleased that so celebrated a man as Walsingham spoke so freely and earnestly in his house. Remembering that his reading was much admired, he now came to him and asked him if he would read. Walsingham, whom Maria's presence seemed to have lured onward and unfolded, looked at her, caught her eye, which sparkled at the proposal, and, taking down a volume from the bookcase, read the following narrative.

Chapter VII.

"WHEN I was in Italy some years ago, I knew a young Englishman, who was in the habit of seeking places to reside in, little frequented by his countrymen. He was a lover of solitude and study, and addicted to reverie; and much of his life was a gentle and shimmering dream, that glided to the music of romantic traditions. At the time I now refer to, he had selected as his abode one of the deserted palaces of the Venetian nobility on the banks of the Brenta. But he had no acquaintance with the owners to interrupt his solitude; for he had hired it from the steward to whom their affairs were entrusted. Though it was much out of order, it

had attracted his fancy from having a gallery of pictures, chiefly portraits, still remaining, and in good preservation. There was also a large neglected garden, with a terrace along the river; and in its shady overgrown walks the Englishman sat or wandered for many hours of the day. But he also spent much time in the picture-gallery, conversing with the grave old senators, saturating his mind with the colours of Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese, and, like a modern Paris, contemplating the goddesses of Titian's pencil. But there was one picture which gradually won his heart. It was a portrait by Giorgione of a young Venetian lady; and the old servant of the house called her La Celestina. She had the full luxurious Venetian form; but, unlike any of the other female portraits, there was a profusion of rather light brown hair flowing down her back, as one sees in some of the early Italian pictures of the Virgin; and the sunny stream fell from a wreath of bay leaves. Her dress was of dark green silk. An antique bust of an old man stood on a table before her; and her right hand and raised forefinger seemed to indicate that both she and the spectator on whom her divine eyes were fixed, must listen to some expected oracle from the marble lips. She might have served as a lovely symbol of the fresh present world listening to the fixed and Sibylline past. Her eyes were large and dark, but not lustrous: they seemed rather

heavy, with an inward thoughtful melancholy, as if there were something in her situation or character more solemn than her years or circumstances could have led one to expect. There was no tradition however of her story, except that she was a daughter of the family which still possessed the palace and the picture, and that she had died in early life.

"Before this figure the young Englishman would remain for an hour or two at a time, endeavouring to shape out some distinct view of her being and story. This was idle work, as it led him to no definite and lasting creation; but it occupied him for the time as well as anything else that he was likely to have done. By and by he had the chamber next to that part of the gallery where the picture was, arranged as his bedroom, that so he might be near his incorporeal mistress even during the hours of sleep. One night, soon after this change, while he was lying in bed and musing of Celestina, he thought he heard a noise in the gallery consecrated to her, low voices, and a light step. He felt, I believe, nay cherished some dash of superstitious fear in his character; and he did not rise to examine into the matter. The next night was that of the full moon; and again he heard the same sound; and again for the third time on the night following. Then it ceased; and for some days he was in much perplexity. The gallery by day-light presented no appearance

of change. He brooded over the remembrance, whether founded in fact or imagination, till it struck him that perhaps there was a connexion between the sounds and the age of the moon when they were heard, and that, if so, they might possibly return at the next corresponding period. He grew thin and nervous with anxiety, and resolved at all hazards to endeavour to clear up the secret. The night before the full moon came, and with it the sounds; the light whispers murmured and sang along the high walls and ceilings; and the steps flitted like fairies from end to end of the galleries. But even now he could not resolve to part with the tremulous pleasure of the mystery. The following night, that of the full moon, he felt worn-out, fretted, and desperate. Again the sounds were heard; the doors opened and closed; the steps throbbed in his heart; the indistinguishable words flew on, till he caught the name of Celestina in a low but clear tone. He seized a sword and stepped silently to a door near him, which opened into the gallery, and was in deep shadow. Unclosing it slowly, he looked down the long room; and there, opposite the place of the well-known picture, stood, in the bright moonlight, Celestina herself upon the floor. The right hand was raised like that on the canvass, as if to listen; and the eyes were looking earnestly into the depth of gloom which hid the Englishman. He let fall his sword, let go the

door, which closed before him; and, when he had courage to open it again, the gallery was empty, and the still clear light fell only on a vacant surface.

"The consequence of this event was a severe illness; and a friend and fellow-countryman was sent for from Venice to attend his sick bed. This visitor gradually obtained an outline of the facts from the sufferer, and then applied to the old Italian servant in order to arrive at a reasonable explanation. But he stoutly denied all knowledge of anything that could throw light on the matter. Next day the friend found upon his table a slip of paper, on which was written, in a beautiful female hand, a request that he would present himself in the eastermost arbour of the garden at the hour of the siesta. Of course he did so, and found a lady in a dark dress, closely veiled. She said, in fine Italian, that she had begged to see him, in order to repair the mischief which had been accidentally done. 'My father,' she said, 'the owner of this palace, is of a proud but impoverished Venetian family. His son is an officer in an Austrian Regiment, which has been stationed for some years in Hungary; and I am the old man's only companion. He is a little peculiar and eccentric in his habits and character; and all his strongest feelings are directed towards the memory of his ancestors, whose abode is now occupied by your friend. Nothing but necessity would have in-

duced him to let it to a stranger, and to reside in the small house in the neighbourhood which we now inhabit. He still perpetually recurs to the traditional stories of his family's former greatness; and it is a favourite point of belief with him, that his daughter closely resembles the Celestina whose picture is in the gallery, and whose name she bears. Owing to this fancy, he is never satisfied unless he sees her dressed in imitation of the idolized portrait. But, as he no longer inhabits the house, and does not choose to present himself to its occupier in a light which he considers so unworthy, he could gratify his love for the pictures only by visiting them at night, at a time when the moon affords a light, by which, imperfect as it is, his ancestors appear to him distinct and beautiful beings. Nor could he be long contented with this solitary pleasure, but insisted that I should accompany him. We have more than once entered through a door from the gardens; and it was on the last of these occasions that I thought I heard a noise; and, while I listened, the door at the end of the gallery was opened, and then violently closed again. On this alarm we immediately escaped as we had entered; and the strange consequences to your friend have caused me much regret. We heard of his illness from our old servant Antonio, the only person who knew of our nightly visits. To convince you that this is the whole secret, I have put on

the dress I then wore; and you shall judge for yourself of my resemblance to the picture.'

"So saying, she threw aside her veil and mantle, and surprised the stranger with the view of her noble eyes, and of her youthful Italian beauty, clothed in a dress of rich green silk, which closely imitated that of the painted Celestina. Her hearer was amused by the mistake, and delighted by her explanation. He ventured to ask the lady, that, when his sick friend should be a little recovered, she would complete her kindness by enabling him to judge for himself of the beautiful resemblance which had misled him. She said, that she would willingly do so, and only regretted that, from her father's turn of character, it would be almost impossible to make him assent to any meeting with the present occupier of his ancient palace. She said therefore that it must be a private interview, and might take place at the same spot on the third day following. Her new acquaintance was compelled to return to Venice, and so could not carry on the adventure in his own person. But the account which he gave to his friend, soon restored the patient to strength and cheerfulness. Immediately after his companion's departure, he had the green and shady arbour prepared for the expected meeting. A collation of choice fruits, sweetmeats, and wine was set out in silver vessels on a marble table. The ghost-seer, dressed according to his own

fancy in the garb of a Venetian cavalier of the old time, waited for his guest, who did not fail him. He thought her far more beautiful than the picture. They sat side by side with the glowing feelings of southern and imaginative youth. She sang for him, and played on a guitar which he had taken care to place at hand; and he felt himself gifted with undreamt-of happiness. They met again more than once, and walked together along the gallery, where he could at leisure compare her with Giorgione's Celestina, and give his own the deliberate preference. But he was at last dismayed by hearing from her, that she was designed by her father for a conventual life, in order to preserve the remnant of his fortune exclusively for his son. The Englishman's decision was soon taken. He too was of noble birth, and had wealth enough to make fortune in his wife unimportant. He gained the father's consent to their marriage; and she is now the mistress of an old English country-house. She looks on the portraits by Vandyke on its walls with as much pleasure as she ever derived from those of Titian; for she now tries to find a likeness in them to more than one young face that often rests upon her knee. Of this new generation, the eldest and the loveliest is called Celestina."

Chapter VIII.

WHEN Walsingham had ended, and replaced the book, Miss Harcourt took it down again, and found that it was a work by Mr. Jeremy Bentham. She turned the volume over in helpless bewilderment, and then showed it to Maria and to Hastings. But the poet turned from the group, and said carelessly, "Those only find who know where to look."

On the evening of a following day, when the clear night had overspread a sky still warm with sunset, and glimmered on a rill before the windows, several of the guests passed from the drawing-room to the terrace; and among these was Maria. She soon left her companions, and wandered down a flight of steps in the quiet, dusky garden. She stood alone leaning against a large marble urn, and looked at the water as it glanced past her on a level with the turf, but a few inches from her foot.

How beautiful, she thought, is every drop as it flits through the light! and how swiftly does it pass to utter darkness! Fleeting gleams in a world of obscurity,—such are life's best joys for those whose life is richest,—for all devoid of Christian faith.

She looked up at the sky and sighed. Sir Charles, who was not far off, though she did not

know of his presence, thought he had never seen her so beautiful. She reminded him of one of his own statues of a nymph. He came and stood beside her, and said, "The sky promises fine weather for to-morrow, I trust."

"Oh, does it? It is very lovely. I do not know why it is that the present is never more beautiful than during a fine summer night; yet it always makes us think rather of the past and the future. The past too seems so long and various, and the future only one great moment."

"Well, Miss Lascelles, for my part I never was more inclined to enjoy the present, and take advantage of it. I have not so often the pleasure of seeing you at Beechurst as to be able now to think of anything else."

"Such a scene as this, I should imagine, could want no additions to make it perfectly delightful."

"Oh! I could fancy it permanently embellished in a very high degree."

"Indeed? I confess it does not occur to me what is wanting."

"Ah, Miss Lascelles, it is I who feel it; but it is to you that I must look for a remedy."

"To me, Sir Charles Harcourt? What can you mean?"

"Need I explain myself further?" and he endeavoured to take her by the hand; "I hoped you had long perceived how entirely my happiness depends on you."

She drew her hand away, and said, with perfect composure, "I assure you the thought is quite new to me, and gives me no pleasure. I trust you will soon find some one much worthier of your regard, and more capable of repaying it as it deserves." So saying, she walked towards the terrace.

"Still allow me to hope that my future endeavours to merit your approbation need not be in vain. I only venture to ask, my dear Miss Lascelles, that I may not be compelled to regard your present language as unchangeable."

She turned round; and there was a pale light from the sky upon her face while she answered: "Believe me, I would not trifle with any one's feelings, however little chance there may be of giving serious pain. I assure you that no length of time can so far alter my mind, as to make me a suitable object of your attentions."

The manner was still more decisive than the words; and he at once replied: "I can only express my regret then that I have troubled you on the subject, and beg that what has passed between us may not be told unnecessarily to others."

So highly cultivated was the lover's indifference, that, on their return to the drawing-room, it was impossible to suppose he had been conversing of anything more important than the flowers or the weather. Maria was a little more disturbed, and somewhat paler than usual. She took up a book

of engravings, and looked for five minutes at the title-page, which happened to be turned upside down. She thought how different had been the manner and the words, the bursting broken language and faltering tone of Arthur, and then the triumphant tearful delight, when he had won an avowal of her affection. Her steady and earnest eyes and motionless attitude had a strange look in the midst of the gay, shifting party. Walsingham saw her from a distance, and looked at first surprised. He then glanced aside, with a very slight expression of sarcasm on his lip, at Sir Charles Harcourt, who was seated at ecarté with a lady. His gaze returned swiftly to Maria; and his whole aspect appeared strengthened and enlarged by the presence of a high and beautiful image. In a few moments she resumed her self-possession, and smiled while she thought of the formal and elaborate manner of her wooer, of the look, the language, and the man, all so far removed from whatever she could imagine of love. She was soon asked to sing, and chose the following song, which Walsingham had that morning written down for her.

Night, that art so smooth and fair,
Fancy fills thy boundless air,
Makes thee more than starry bright,
With a visionary light.

Fears that trembling melt to bliss,
Touch'd by Hope's enchanted kiss,
Joys too soft and thin for day,
In thy moonshine opening play.

Night! so full of pensive sighs;
Night! so clear with speaking eyes;
Night! not high thy bosom swells;
But, oh! peace within thee dwells.

With a murmur sad and sweet
Spirits round thee dawn and fleet;
We, while fond thy love we woo,
Feel that we are spirits too.

Chapter IX.

SIR Charles Harcourt's dressing-room was fitted up with effeminate luxury and magnificence. He was seated in it alone at night, with a museum of toys, trinkets, and furniture about him, and in the midst of several lights reflected by large mirrors. A headache had led him to retire earlier than usual; and the splendid clock upon the chimney-piece, the gilt statuary of which represented Narcissus at the fountain, now struck twelve. The baronet turned pale, and closed his eyes. He opened them again and looked up, trembling as if he expected to see a gigantic hand and dagger raised above him. It was the hour of the charm. In that moment he remembered all the story of the last week, and all the previous life of Sir Charles Harcourt, and at the same time felt and knew that till seven days before he had been Arthur Edmonstone. As a man stands at the junction of two converg-

ing vistas, and with a turn of the eye can look down one or other, although they widen to miles apart, and sees the one travel over hill and dale, and end on the summit of a rugged mountain, while the other, between clipped elms, stretches out of sight along a smoth green meadow, so he could now look back upon two lives, as if both of them had been his own. He could not know these two existences, as he now did, without comparing them. While he remembered all that Arthur Edmonstone had been, his active and many-sided life, the bright colours of feeling and imagination, and the range of talent and knowledge that then were his, it seemed, on turning to the state in which he now found himself, that all was shrunk and withered. The outward clothing and attributes indeed were splendid; but he only discovered mean faculties and vulgar aims within his breast, and chiefly the wish to be admired as a patron and a gentleman, without any enjoyment of the realities which for him were only convenient fictions. He reflected also on the strange scene which had taken place that evening with Maria, and her cold polite contempt; and he shivered at the thought, while he saw the form of Sir Charles Harcourt reflected in the four large mirrors. For a moment it occurred to him that he would be Arthur again. But he looked at his ring, and remembered the old man's warning, that, if once he returned to his original

being, his privilege would be forfeited for ever. He thought of a score of different characters, each of which he should in some respects like to assume. But everything connected with his own station in life now seemed to him hollow and barren, and smitten with the curse of Sir Charles Harcourt's self-contempt. A freer, simpler, humbler existence alone seemed really desirable. The stern moral superiority of Maria, and the thought of an unattainable union with her, drove him as far as possible away in a different direction. At the same time, by some trick of fancy, the blooming and vigorous nature of the country girl whom he had seen at the farm-house, returned to his heart. Thus cutting short all his perplexities by a violent resolution, he breathed upon his ring, pronounced the name of James Wilson, and his wish was accomplished.

The Sir Charles Harcourt who woke the next morning at Beechurst, was he who had always possessed it. He now remembered the events of the past week, as if they had been parts of his own life. There appeared no break in his self-consciousness; nor had he the slightest notion of the gap in his existence which had been filled by the presence of another person.

Chapter X.

EARLY on Sunday morning James opened his eyes in the old farm-house, dressed himself hastily, and went to look after the various matters in the stable and the farm-yard, which even on Sunday must be attended to. He then returned to the house to make himself smart, which he succeeded in by dint of clean linen, a new blue coat with large gilt buttons, a white handkerchief round his neck, a yellow waistcoat, a drab pair of breeches, and top-boots. He certainly looked very well; and, while he gazed into the little twisted looking-glass, he even ventured to think so, but somehow he feared not well enough to please Ann. She too, after helping to prepare the breakfast, had put on her best clothes. Her long dark hair was almost hidden under a cap, but still formed a glossy shade round her forehead. The face it crowned was as winning, as bright health and brighter spirits, high complexion and pretty features could make it. Nor did her figure look less graceful in the white cotton gown with little blue flowers all over it, which James had given her, and which she had tied with a blue sash. The white stockings and black shoes set off her feet, and showed that her hands, but for a life of labour, would not have been less neatly formed. When at work, she often sang half-

inwardly some verse of a gay or sad song, and still went earnestly about her task; but when resting, or at meals, and especially when James was with her, her face was in a perpetual play of blushes, and downcast looks, and hearty laughter; and eyes and teeth and cheeks and lips and soul all seemed possessed by some imp of heedless merriment. So was it this morning. As soon as breakfast was over, she put on her bright straw bonnet with its blue ribbon, and James his new hat, and the father his with its brim at least six inches broad; and, leaving the mother at home to take care of the house, the three set out to walk through the fields to church. The old man often lingered, or turned a step aside, or stopped to speak to some of the neighbours, and Ann and James could talk almost as freely as if they had been in a wilderness. The church was more than usually crowded with people come to hear a new organ played, which had been presented by the kind-hearted squire; for it was not Sir Charles Harcourt's parish; but Mr. Musgrave, the curate, preached a sermon, in which he laid bare to the astonished culprits the erroneousness of the motives that led them to attend public worship only when some strange novelty attracted them. But the Wilsons were unwrung, and enjoyed both the organ and the sermon, except that Ann was sorry for the poor people who had acted so foolishly, and were now so severely reprimanded. The old

man pronounced the sermon a right good one, and said that their parson was the best man in that country, only now and then a little too sharp upon people's faults. In the afternoon Ann staid at home; and the other three went to the service. In the evening the mother undertook to milk the cows, and the father to attend to all other matters, while Ann and James went out to walk.

They strolled arm in arm, saying little to each other, along the deep and warm lanes overgrown with grass, and enclosed between high banks and bushy hedges. The nightingale was still heard in the distance. The wild rose and the honeysuckle climbed on each hand, and were interwoven with the flowers of the bind-weed and the nightshade. The perfume from the white and purple clover fields filled the air. Now and then James caught at a wild flower, and gave it to Ann, who took it, and only said in a low voice, "Thank you." And still they wandered on, till they turned through a gap into the thick dark copse. They passed forward through the green shadows, broken here and there by some straggling beam of yellow light, till they reached a point on the banks above a little stream, glancing away under its screen of hazel and alder. Here they found the broad grey table left in cutting down an enormous oak-tree. On this Ann seated herself; and James sat beside her. He poked the ground before him with a

stick. She settled her nosegay, and stuck it in her breast. At last he said, "Ann, I have something,—something,—something,—to say to you."

"Well,—well,—well,—James, what is it?"

"It is a very fine evening."

Ann drew a long sigh, as if relieved from a great fright, and answered, "Yes, it is, very fine."

"Our hay is very well saved this year, Ann;—and it is very pleasant to be here with you;—I mean, I like us to be together."

"So do I."

"Ann, will you marry me?"

A long pause followed, and then a low "Yes," and she hung down her head. Marble balconies or silken pavilions never witnessed a fonder kiss than that in which their lips united, as they sat upon the old oak-stump.

When they returned by moonlight to the farm-house, Ann's manner was much altered. She went silently through the kitchen, where the old couple sat, to her own room; and James too, who remained with his parents, held his tongue for a few minutes. Then he burst into a loud laugh, jumped up and told his story, and hugged his mother in his arms, and asked his father's consent, and could not finish a sentence till he ended in a fit of tears, which changed again to laughter.

That night their supper was peaceful and joyous, as if it had been a meal in Paradise before the Fall of Man.

Chapter XI.

THE next day at Burntwood farm was strangely in contrast with this Sunday evening. A letter came in the morning to Mr. Wilson, written in the name of his lost daughter,—for she was herself too ill to write,—entreating his forgiveness, and telling of the loss of her husband and child. Their hearts were divided between joy at hearing of her, and grief at the thought of her sufferings. It was immediately determined that James should go to London and see her, and, if possible, remove her to Burntwood. He set out that afternoon. He wrote from London to his father, giving an account of his sister's state, and announcing that he would return with her at once to Burntwood. Ann also received a letter from him by the same post, which was the longest and most elaborate composition he had ever attempted, or she had ever seen. The greater portion of it ran as follows:

"Dear Ann, I cannot be so long away without writing to you. I reached London at noon on Tuesday; and in the course of that day I found

out poor Elizabeth. But, as I have written all about her to father, I shall not say the same things over again to you. I was advised to take a bed here at the Black Bear, by Smithfield, where there are very decent, civil people, and a great many farmers and graziers. But some of them, as I am told, are only these London chaps dressed up to look like us from the country, and so cheat us unawares. And clever knowing fellows many of them look. I feel as much ashamed when I look one of them in the face, as if he could see through me and knew I was never in London before. But when any one seems cross with me for staring at him, I take off my hat like a gentleman, and make him a low bow; and I notice that then they mostly seem pleased and good-humoured like. But, dear Ann, all the farmers and the farming men too in our country would make no difference in this big crowded place, if they were all here together. Dear Ann, when I came into the streets on the top of the coach, I thought, to be sure it was fair-day. So I asked a man who sat next me; and he said, 'Ay, to be sure, man: in London it's always fair-day for fools. Many a one of them comes here to look for a purse, and goes back without a pocket.' I knew by his way of speaking he was jeering me. But another gentleman spoke to me milder, and said, 'It is always the same in London; for there are people enough living there to crowd all the

fairs in England.' And so, to be sure, there are unaccountable many of them, and carriages, and carts, and drays. Oh, Ann, it is altogether a perplexity! The coach could hardly go along the street for them; and some of them were long things, like big hearses, only painted bright colours, and full of live rich people. But the poor walk along the sides of the streets; and yet some of them are as finely dressed as lords and ladies.

"Dear Ann, since I came, I have walked about, and looked at the different things and people; and a wonder the place is to see. The crowd goes along past one, as many and as busy as ants; and none of them seem thinking of each other, any more than if they were all trees or stones. In our country, and when I go to market or fair, I know most of the people by look, and shake hands with half of them. But here in London I felt quite lonely among so many who cared nothing for me, nor I for them. Dear Ann, I saw many scores, ay, hundreds of fine ladies, some of them riding in their carriages, with their beautiful silk and lace and feathers, but none of them said how d'ye do to me; and I would have given them all in a bundle, and their carriages too, for a look of yours, though they seem so proud and high. I dare say they would be pretty much surprised at it. And oh, Ann, the shops! all the clothes, and meat, and

wonderful things, more in one shop than I could tell of in all my life! I have seen eggs enough to fill our barn, and frying-pans enough to fry them all at once, and bacon enough to eat with them. I do suppose, that, in the front of one shop, there is glass enough to make a glasscase for our biggest rick, and silks, and satins, and shawls, and I do not know what all inside, that would make a cloth larger than our great rick-cloth. There are some big shops too full of nothing but boots and shoes. But no doubt, when the King wants shoes for his army, he comes here and buys them; and they must wear out a power of them in those long marches, when they are going after glory, which I suppose must be all one with walking against time. Dear Ann, I judge too, that the King must use a sight of things for himself; for I counted eleven tailors' shops that had 'Tailor to the King,' written upon them. So you may guess what a deal of clothes he wears. I saw too nigh as many cake-shops with 'Confectioner to the King;' confectioner means a man that makes cakes; but, if he eats too many tarts and things, and makes himself sick, there is at least one doctor's shop for every cake-shop, with 'Apothecary to the King' upon it. I have been by St. Paul's Church too, which is the biggest thing in the world, since the Temple of Solomon, and Noah's Ark; and I thought my eyes would

never get up to the top, it is so high. It has a roof like a punch-bowl, with a spike sticking out of it. Only, I think, the punch-bowl must be a good half-mile round. And, dear Ann, it is all built up with pillar work, and windows, so strong, that it seems it would stand for ever. Thought I to myself, I wonder, will that fine place burn in the great fire, that you know, Ann, will burn down everything in the Day of Judgment. What a blaze that will be! For I am telling no lies when I say, that, if you could lift up the church, you might set it down over Burntwood, dwelling-house, and barns, and trees, and all, just, as I could clap an extinguisher over your thimble, and room to spare too. Now you must know that, all the while I was going along the streets, there was such a whirling, and a clatter, and a squeaking, and a buzzing, and a smoke, quite unaccountable, that altogether it made my head turn round inside, as if it had been a mill-stone. And, dear Ann, I began to have all manner of queer fancies, as if I should never get back home. And I saw ever so many black kings on horseback, stuck up in different places, and looking grander and fiercer than the judge at assizes, just as if they had only to come down from the stone places they were on, and ride over all the people like a donkey among the chickens. But I suppose they were put there to keep them out of mischief.

"Last night an oldish sort of a farmer, that the people here tell me has a deal of grazing land down in Essex, sat near me while I was taking my supper; and he says to me quite friendly, 'Young man, will you come with me to the play?' So I said, 'Yes to be sure, when I have done this plate of beef.' So he told me to leave my watch and my money with the landlord, all but a few shillings for use; and off we went; for, as I had had something to eat and drink, I was as fresh as a colt. Dear Ann, when we got to the playhouse, there was a big paper stuck up with red letters on it, saying they were going to act 'Woman's Miseries, or the Victim of the Heart,' translated from the French. Well, thought I, if it is anything about those French that we beat last war, it must be good fun, because as how they eat frogs for mutton, and tadpoles for lamb. We paid at the door, and went into a place that Grub,—an odd name isn't it, Ann?—he's the Essex man,—told me was called the pit; and there we sat down in a big room all full of candles, and people making noises and faces, and looking as strange as could be. Then the fiddles played very loud and pretty; and then the play began; and they pulled up a big cloth; and there was a place behind it for all the world like the floor of our barn. There were gentlemen and ladies walking on it, and one of them was called Feli-

city,—an odd name, isn't it, Ann? She was to be married to a gentleman immediately; and it was all settled; and she seemed mighty fond of him. But, after she was married, she came forward close to us, and told us quite as a secret, that she did not like him at all, only she did not say so beforehand, for fear it should stop the marriage; but that she liked two other men better. Then she said her father was an ungrateful tyrant, and a Saracen's head, or something uncommon, for not having guessed her dislike, and spared her de-li-ca-cy,—that was the word,—the pain of telling it. So, to revenge herself, she could do nothing but poison the poor old gentleman, which I thought very hard upon him. Then she sat down on a green seat all covered with roses, and, dear Ann, she stooped her head upon her hand, and gave a great sigh, and said, 'But, when that is done, still I shall not be married to the man of my heart, but quite the contrary. Suppose then I also poison my detested husband. Then, alas! I shall not know which of the others to choose; for my heart is too tender, and cannot decide for either of them.' Thought I to myself,—Young woman, for all your good looks and finery, I am glad you're not my wife. Then first her father came to see her, and wish her joy of the marriage; and she gave him a glass of wine to drink her health; and, do you know, that very wine had

the poison in it. We should never have thought of that down at Burntwood, would we? Then he went away; and in came one of her two lovers, and wanted to kiss her; but she treated him very properly, and would not let him touch her; only at last she whispered him, loud enough for me to hear, that he must go kill her husband.

"Just then the other lover came in, dear Ann; and as they were both officers, and had their swords by their sides, they drew them and fought together, while the lady fell down on her knees and looked up to the ceiling. Then one of them was killed, and fell close by her; and he gave her such a look before he died,—O dear! Then she got up and ran to the other, and put her arms about him, and said, 'Brave Henry, you have won my heart.' So they talked about it a bit, just as if they had been bargaining for a pig at market; and they settled they would hide the dead man under the garden seat she had been sitting on; and she sat down on it again, so that nothing could be seen. Then the lover went away behind the bushes; and she turned up her eyes, and groaned, and said, 'Now her life was a burthen to her; for she had seen the death of the only man she loved.' Just then her husband came in, and wanted to talk to her in a friendly way; but she pushed him off, and called him a faithless monster, and an oppressor of

innocence, though I thought him a very nice civil gentleman; and then she upset the seat, in the way a cow upsets a milk-pail, and showed him the dead body, and said, 'There is the man I loved, the true husband of my heart. Oh, that you had died instead of him!' Then the lover heard her speak, I suppose, as listeners never hear any good of themselves; and he came in and said, 'What, ma'am, was it he you loved? Perfidious woman, then will I send you to join him.' He was going to run her through with his sword; and I never saw the squire angrier at a poacher than he was with her: but the husband came in the way to save her; and the officer killed him instead, and said that would do as well. Dear Ann, then the father came in with a great many constables and soldiers to carry the officer to gaol. They got hold of him, and took away his sword, and put a chain upon his wrist; and then he began to struggle; but it was no use; and they were going away with him, when the father said, 'My daughter, some one has poisoned me; I hope it isn't you.' And he fell down, and rolled his eyes about, and clenched his hands, and died. Then the lady said, 'Alas! how am I devoted to misery! My destiny has made me wretched; but my principles have always been sublime. Henry, while you go to death, and I into a nunnery, know that my heart has always been true to you. We shall meet in a better

world, where it is not a crime to love. Take this kiss.' Dear Ann, then the cloth was let down again, and I said to Mr. Grub, 'I wonder does all that come of eating frogs?'"

Chapter XII.

BEFORE the end of the week James returned, and with him his suffering sister. She was too weak to stand, but was lifted out of the market-cart that had brought her from the next town, and was received in her mother's arms. Her own well-known chamber had been prepared and arranged with all the little objects familiar to her from childhood, the oaken cupboard, the walnut chest of drawers, the queer oval looking-glass, and the pictures of Spring in yellow ribbons, and of a brown Abraham about to sacrifice a pink Isaac. The small bed, with its cross-barred curtains of red and white, in which the careless girl had slept so tranquilly, seemed like a quiet grave opening its arms to receive the weary widow. Her mother undressed her, and laid her down to rest, and then sat beside her and held her hand, restraining her own grief at the sight of the wasted faded being before her, while a long flow of tears came from the daughter's closed eyes. At last she seemed about to sleep, but looked up

feebly, and said, "Would my father kiss me as he did when I was a good child?" The mother went for her husband, who came in with a tenderness of aspect such as he never showed before, and, bending over her, kissed her hot lips again and again, and murmured, "Bless you, my child! God bless you!" "Oh, father!" she said, "can you still love me?" His tears mixed with hers; and when he left her to her mother's care she fell into a deep sleep.

She dreamed that she was again a child, gathering cowslips in a well-known green meadow near the farm-house, and that suddenly she saw two figures standing close to the high bank, one in a white cloak with a white hood over its head, and the other similarly dressed in crimson. They seemed taller than men; and with stately looks and gestures each invited her to approach and to drink of his fountain, which gushed out of the bank. The fountain of the white figure, she saw, was milk; and she thought that she had often drunk of that: but the other stream was red wine, which she had never tasted; and she turned to it, and drank of it from the bowl which the crimson figure held out to her. Then the white figure sank down, and in sinking uncovered its face, which she saw was that of Mr. Musgrave, the clergyman; and the cloak spread over him and round from him in a circle, wider and wider; and the white stream poured forth and foamed,

and met it; and the whole turned to white snow and ice. But the red figure seemed all wrapped in red fire; and the wine-stream turned to fire, and flooded the field around her, and beat against the snow; and the figure raised its hood, and showed the face of her husband. Then suddenly she felt herself no longer a child, but a woman, with her arms around him; and her clothes caught fire from him; and they both burned together, standing on a field of fire, while the red streams devoured the snow, and blazed, but without smoke, over all the land.

Then a gigantic Death, all whose bones seemed icicles, glided with swift strides over the field; and his cold breath put out the flames, and chilled them through; and they shrank and fell together; and the Death took the bowl that had held the fiery wine, and filled it with the snow that still lay in a patch around the white fountain, and poured it over them once and again, and yet again. She knew that it was the silence of the grave, which he was pouring over them, till they were buried under a hill of silent snow. But it fell softly and pleasantly upon them, and calmed their burning; and so they slumbered in their grave, locked in each other's arms; and she felt that their baby slept between them; yet its spirit sang, she thought, at the same time out of a tuft of cowslips on the bank.

While she dreamed thus, a gentle smile came

over her face, and her mother knew that her pains had ceased for a moment.

Chapter XIII.

HASTINGS was an inveterate walker; and in the course of one of his rambles he found himself, after many hours' exertion, wet and tired, close to Burntwood farm. He went in, and was hospitably received by Farmer Wilson and his wife, as well as by James and Ann. They were going to dinner, and invited him to join them, but proposed that he should first change his clothes, which were thoroughly soaked, James offering to lend him a suit of his own. Hastings gladly consented, and soon appeared in the young farmer's Sunday garb. He had been so used to wear the costume of different countries and characters, that nothing looked awkward on him. James could not help fancying that the visiter appeared to much more advantage in the clothes, than their true owner. Ann did not join in this opinion; but she was much amused at the spectacle of another person than James in her cousin's habiliments, and was constantly hanging down her head to conceal a broad smile, although she acknowledged to herself that Hastings looked well and at ease in his new dress.

The wet clothes were hung up by the fire; and the whole party sat down to dinner, while one or other of the women went frequently to the neighbouring room, to see how Elizabeth was. Hastings was delighted with his adventure, and ate like a true farmer, and talked so as to draw out all the information he could from both the Wilsons, often introducing a word for the women. He picked up many facts as to the peasantry, and the modes of feeling and thinking of the country people. He also told some anecdotes from his travels, which interested his new friends, and made Ann open her eyes wide, and look at him as if some preternatural being had suddenly appeared in the well-known clothes. He spoke of African huntings, Hindoo murders, the witchcraft of American Indians, and the roving robbers of Arabia and Persia,—of volcanoes, crocodiles, and gold-mines.

The mention of juggling and magic led him to speak of many strange things that he had known of in different countries, some of them easily to be explained, others apparently unintelligible, but not the less certain. He said, for instance, that once, when residing in one of the West Indian islands, he had bought, and taken rather as a favourite than a servant, a handsome boy, coloured, or of the mixed race, and eleven or twelve years old. He was remarkable for the liveliest and most joyous spirits, as well as for readiness and

clearness of head. But after some weeks, without any seeming cause, the boy became melancholy and dull, and was evidently losing his health. His master questioned him as to the reason of this change; but he would give none, and appeared terrified at the thought of confessing. After much persuasion however, he burst into tears, fell on his knees, and said he would tell all. For many nights, he said, he had always had the same bad dreams, urging him to rob his master, and leave the money in a certain decayed tamarind tree near the house. This advice was given him in his sleep by different figures, now by a beautiful white woman, now by a great negro chief, dressed in green and crimson clothes, with a golden sword beside him; sometimes by cloudy gigantic figures of men and women playing on drums, and kindling great fires, in which they threatened to burn him; sometimes by a white preacher, with long grey hair, and a book in his hand, out of which a prodigious bamboo grew up into the sky, with a star in the top of it; and sometimes by a number of little rose-coloured children, who played round him, and all sang the same thing in his ear. His master comforted him, told him the bad dreams would go away, and gave him money, which he desired him to leave in the hollow tree. A person was then sent to watch, who found that the money was taken away by an old negro woman, who some-

times came about the house from a neighbouring estate to sell vegetables and poultry. The difficulty was to conceive how the dreams could arise in the boy's mind. In order to discover this, his master, without informing him, bored a hole in the partition of his bedroom, and remained with his eye directed through it. The houses in those countries are often not fastened, nor even the doors laid to. It was not very surprising therefore, that early in the night a faint sound was heard in the boy's room, and an old woman was seen to enter, bent nearly double, and looking like some strange grizzled baboon, rather than a human being. She crept to the bedside, and, after seating herself, and making various signs, began to mutter in a low voice close to the boy's ear. These were some of the words which the Englishman caught: "Now, white woman come you very booful much,—tell you take massa's money,—put in um tree,—now she gib you um kiss very sweet much." And so the old hag went on suggesting image after image, while it was evident, from the boy's writhing and gasping, that the words in his mind took the appearance of corresponding things, but did not wake him from his painful sleep. The woman was seized while creeping away, and put in the stocks, where she was shown to the boy the next day; and means were taken to frighten her from ever again approaching the house. The boy soon recovered

his cheerfulness, but would probably, in the opinion of an intelligent physician, be liable all his life to similar influences from those about him.

After this, Hastings was led to speak of occurrences no less strange which he had experienced in other countries. "Once," he said, "I made a sudden journey from one part of Persia to another, in company with several natives, whom I resembled in my dress, beard, and general appearance. On the last day of my expedition, I rode for fourteen hours without stopping, and reached the city of my destination in the evening. As we passed through the gate, I saw, among the crowd who were looking at our cavalcade, an old man, who seemed to watch me with great intentness. We were stopped for a few moments in one of the streets; and, on my looking round, he was again close to me. After we had settled ourselves for the night in our khan, a large building designed for travellers, while my servant was attending to my horse, and I was about to eat my supper, the same old man approached me, and asked if I would come with him and share a better meal than the one before me. I looked at him now more attentively, and, having before seen from his dress that he was one of the Armenians, who are natives of the East, but not Mahometans, it now also appeared to me that he was of an honest and benevolent countenance. He looked respect-

able, but not wealthy. I felt that I had my pistols about me, loosened my sword, and followed him. We passed through several streets, and entered a small door in a high and solid wall: this led us into a court; and thence we wont into a garden, at the further side of which a building stood; into this we entered; and I found myself in a scene of wonder. The light of many perfumed lamps showed that the walls were covered with blue and red silk embroidered in gold. There were several large ebony and japan cabinets, filled with golden plate, and with pyramids of cut and rough jewels. The carpet was of brocade, and the cushions that lay upon it of purple silk, worked with flowers in seed-pearl. The old man made me sit down, and left me for a few minutes; after which he returned superbly dressed, and placed himself beside me. He spoke very little, and seemed of a grave, if not melancholy humour. But he had hardly given me time to wonder at his proceedings, when a train of slaves came in, beautifully clothed, and bearing water in silver bowls to wash the hands, and then a multitude of dishes of the most delicate and costly meats. We sat almost in silence: wine cool as snow was brought to me, and again the ewers for washing. When we were left alone, the old man sighed, and said, "Stranger, great as may be your wonder, it cannot exceed my confusion. But it is useless to delay speaking

what must be told. I am a merchant, accounted the richest of this city, and, some have said, of Persia. But my wealth avails little for happiness. I have an only child, a daughter, than whom I believe there are few more beautiful. But all my joy in her is blighted by the misfortune of the evil eye which has fallen upon her. Her health has long been wasting away. I have consulted many physicians, mollahs, and dervishes; but none have been of use to her. One, reputed the sagest of the holy men in all the province, told me three months ago, that on this day, a stranger, a Frank, would enter the eastern gate at sunset, that I must wait for him and entreat him, and, if he would consent to become the husband of my daughter, the spell would be defeated, and she would live; but that, if he refused, within an hour of his denial she would surely die. You see the contents of this room, which are but a small part of my riches: all will be hers at my death; and more than you now see I would at once bestow on her as a portion. But, although it is not a Persian usage, I know the marriage customs of the Franks, and will show you the damsel before you decide." He then drew off a curtain from a door; and the maiden, who had been sitting within, rose up timidly, let the covering fall off head, and, with a low bending of the body, and hands crossed, stood trembling before me. She

was beautiful, even to European eyes; but I saw that she was dying. I stooped to kiss the hem of her garment, drew the curtain before her, and led the old man away. Having made him sit beside me, I told him, with many thanks, that I could not accept his bounteous offer. He looked at me with fixed eyes for a full minute: then his countenance assumed an expression of deadly fury, and, exclaiming, "Slave, you shall repent this insolence," he clapped his hands thrice violently. Immediately six or seven armed men entered, to whom he called to seize me. I had time to draw my sword; and, enraged at his violence, while they rushed upon me, I made a blow at him; but his daughter, who had rushed in for the purpose, I fear, of saving me, threw herself between us, and received the blade of the scymitar on her neck. She shrieked, fell, and must doubtless have died upon the spot; but I could not stay to learn her fate; for several swords were lifted against me. In the confusion I fired a pistol among my assailants, dashed a lamp against some muslin hangings near me, which set them in a blaze, sprang into the closet where the girl had been, and forced my way through the women's apartments into the street. I left the town the next morning, and never returned to it: nor can I to this hour explain by what means the dervish had predicted my arrival and its disastrous consequences."

Chapter XIV.

TO such tales as these, while they sat round the fire after dinner, and the drenching rain still fell, the Wilsons lent an admiring attention. The father in return told some English wonders of ghosts and omens, apparently without giving them much credit; and he afterwards said, "No doubt there is plenty of fortune-telling and all such nonsense going on in the neighbourhood, as there is a gang of gipsies encamped at no great distance." This awakened the curiosity of Hastings; for he had seen bodies of that dispersed race in almost every country between India and England, and could speak something of their peculiar language. He enquired particularly where they were to be found; and, as soon as the rain abated, he sent a message to Beechurst, to say he should probably be absent for some hours, and then set out in search of the tents of the wanderers.

He left the little family full of interest in so wonderful a man. Poor Ann, in whom every emotion bubbled at once to the surface, spoke twice or thrice to James, as if she felt more admiration for Hastings than he was pleased with. His annoyance was much increased by anger at himself for having any such feeling from so absurd a cause. The family however

all parted for the night, apparently good friends. But James, when alone, instead of going to bed, sat and thought over his visit to London, and mourned his own ignorance and perplexity as to everything beyond the small circle of his daily life. In addition to this discontent, he could not free himself from the image of Hastings, dressed in his clothes, and talking of so many wondrous things that he had never before heard of, with a composure and liveliness to him so astonishing. How large and various, he thought, is the world! and what a brutish stupidity is it that leaves me so ignorant! What have I to describe to Ann, that she does not already know as well as I? Impatient and unhappy, he began to undress himself. But, when the clock struck twelve, the whole of his story as Arthur Edmonstone and Sir Charles Harcourt blazed out upon him; and he felt for and found the Onyx Ring tied to a ribbon round his neck. He cut the string, and put the ring upon his finger. The lawyer, the baronet, and the farmer, were three distinct figures that now came before him as his own, though he knew that the original form of his being was that of Arthur. Each of these he had tried, and with each of them been dissatisfied. Neither of the changes which he had experienced had supplied that which was wanting in his original existence; and each had distressed him by its own hindrances and pains.

It seemed that nothing would really supply his cravings, but the unbroken freshness and vigour of temperament, the keen and cheerful courage of a man like Hastings, finding pleasure wherever there is room for adventure, and striking out adventure where others would only discover a dull routine. The figure too of the man dressed in the farmer's clothes, yet in experience and versatility so much his superior, and awakening so strongly the alternate laughter and amazement of poor Ann, haunted him invincibly; and, raising the ring to his mouth, he pronounced the name of Hastings. The true James was restored to his native position, unconscious of an interruption in his life; and the possessor of the ring found himself in the character of Hastings, a visitor in the gipsy camp.

Chapter XV.

HASTINGS was lying on some straw, under a canopy of blankets and canvass, with a gipsy man and two or three boys beside him, when he was roused by a rough voice exclaiming, "Come, my lad, if you want to see this job, you must be up and stirring." He then remembered that, before lying down, he had settled to accompany some of the men of the party, who were in league

with smugglers, for the purpose of helping to land and run a cargo, which, owing to the shortness of the nights, was at this season a difficult undertaking. The party consisted of four men besides Hastings; and it was evident from their tone and manner that he had obtained their entire confidence. They walked for two or three miles at a swift pace, till they came out upon the further side of a high bank, from which the dark line of the sea was faintly visible between two cliffs. Here they climbed up a steep ascent covered with brushwood on one side of the road, and remained still for ten minutes, till their leader whispered, "Hush! all right!" and pointed out a light down below them, apparently from a cottage-window. They then crept along a path above the road for a hundred yards, till they reached a point where they again clambered down to the highway, and, after crossing it, moved on in a field towards a stile, where they all passed into the orchard of a farm-house, and there found at least fifty other men assembled for the same object. Hastings perceived, by the sounds from a neighbouring barn, that it was full of horses. There was a good deal of whispering among the men; and they evidently expected every moment to receive the signal for rushing to the beach. The gipsy leader felt his way with his followers along the orchard hedge,—for in the shadow of the trees it was pitch-dark,—until they reached the house,

where he spoke to a man who stood leaning against the door-post. Hastings could not catch much of the conversation, but found that they were disputing about him. Suddenly the gipsy took him by the hand and pulled him towards the entrance, when the other said, "Come in then," and opened the door. The gipsy and Hastings followed him, and found themselves in a low unfurnished room, with a candle on the floor. The man, who was tall and bulky, and dressed as a farmer, looked at Hastings, and said, "Who are you?" Hastings answered that he was nothing but a wanderer for amusement, who had known much of gipsies in his time, and continued to make friends with all he met. The man looked at him with a sharp but quiet eye, and said, "Well, I dare say you are honest; but you are running in the way of mischief that does not concern you. Go up here,—and make no disturbance."

So saying he opened a small door at the foot of a narrow staircase, and held the candle to light the way up. Hastings saw that resistance would be useless, and walked up the stairs, till he found himself in another small room, where there was hardly a trace of light.

He heard the door locked at the bottom of the staircase. Feeling about him, he found that there was no furniture within his reach; and his next object of interest was the window. Through this

he saw the grey line of the sea and the mass of cliff on one side, but could distinguish nothing more. The waves were plainly to be heard beating at regular intervals on the beach. He had not spent five minutes in the room, when he heard a whistle, and then a swift trampling of men and horses; and the whole throng seemed dashing downwards to the shore. Then came a pistol-shot, and then several, and then a roar of voices. The rush sounded as if returning nearer and nearer to the farm-house. Again some scattered shots were fired; and now Hastings thought he distinguished the voice of an officer giving orders. Here the tumult approached close to him; and it flashed upon his mind that, if the smugglers should retreat, and he be found in their head-quarters, his position as a gentleman and a naval officer would be very disagreeable. He forced open the window therefore, and leapt out at a venture, and fell among a crowd of people, spraining his leg so violently as to give him severe pain. There were many voices loud around him; and clamour and curses expressed the astonishment that his fall had occasioned. But he had sufficient presence of mind to ask for help in the gipsy speech; and the consequence was, that one of his former companions recognised him, and called another to his assistance. Between them they lifted Hastings up, and carried him off at full speed through the retreating hurly-burly.

The king's men still hung upon their rear, and prevented them from relaxing their pace. But most of the loaded horses had gone on before; and the remainder now dispersed in different directions as the roads opened on each hand. Still a body of more than a dozen men held together about Hastings; and twice his bearers were relieved. The pain now became so sharp that he begged they would leave him at the first house. Two or three of the leaders consulted for a moment; and then they all went on again in silence for a quarter of an hour. It was now twilight; and Hastings could see that they stopped at a small gate, which they opened, and followed a short brick-paved path up to the door of a respectable house. They seated him on the bricks at the door, with his back against the door-post, knocked violently to rouse the inmates, and then all ran off.

Their alarum succeeded; and in a few minutes a servant came to the door and opened it, accompanied by her master, wrapped in a dressing-gown. When he saw a man lying at the door in the weak light of dawn, he enquired who he was, and what was the matter. Hastings told his name, and said that he was a friend of Sir Charles Harcourt, had met with an accident, and was in so much pain, he would beg to be taken into the house, and to be allowed to reserve his story for another time.

The gentleman said that his name was Musgrave, and that he was the clergyman of the parish, and promised to do all in his power to relieve the sufferings of the stranger. He helped to carry him in and lay him on a bed, and, on hearing of the injury to the limb, sent for the nearest surgeon. He, on his arrival, pronounced that the recovery was likely to require several days, during which the patient must remain where he was. He also ordered the proper applications. After he was gone, Mr. Musgrave earnestly assured his new guest that he was most happy to have an opportunity of assisting any human being in distress, and that he need be under no uneasiness as to remaining there so long as it should be convenient to him. Hastings was now a little more at ease, and could thank him for his kindness, which he gladly accepted.

Chapter XVI.

MR. Musgrave was an unmarried clergyman, whose whole look and manner bore the impress of devotion. Delicacy, purity, gentleness, fervour were combined in his countenance with a shade of pensive melancholy. A thin ascetic-looking face, a high narrow forehead, a slight and bending figure, and a demeanour of the most

careful politeness,—over these was thrown an air of abstraction, which kept him apart from intimacy with any circle of society. The Bible was the world he lived in; and from it he looked out into the actual world, as we look from the earth into the dim atmosphere, or from an island over the sea.

Hastings felt himself, he knew not why, rebuked in the presence of Musgrave, although the clergyman spoke little to him, and that with the most courteous and even friendly good-will. But, while the traveller felt that his host had no sympathy with his pursuits or character, he perceived an elevation and self-denial in him, which made it impossible to regard him as an inferior insensible to some higher kind of excellence. He did not attempt to speak on religious, or, as Hastings would have termed it, professional topics. But it was obvious that nothing local and temporary interested him strongly, and yet that his mind was most fully strained by perpetual thoughts of momentous importance.

A Bible was laid by his care on a small table beside the bed. When, some hours after the arrival of Hastings, he came to pay his guest a visit, he laid another volume beside the Scriptures, which on subsequent examination appeared to be a Prayer-book; and, after he was gone, a servant, who came in with some refreshments, added a third book, which the patient found to

be a volume of Hymns. In weariness and listlessness he took up this, and opened it at the following verses, which he read through, and which seemed so strange to him, that he then went through them a second time. But the impression which they made on him was that of a perplexing and enticing riddle, rather than of any definite meaning which he could fully grasp.

See, through nature's blackest night,
Shines a more than sunny light!
God, a man by human birth,
Comes to die for man on earth.

Shouts of joy and songs of love
O'er the captive sound above:
Forth from evil's hopeless prison
Man is raised; for Christ has risen.

Mount then up, my soul, to God;
Soar from off this earthly sod;
Mount to God beyond the skies;
Christ is risen, and bids thee rise.

Fly this dreary stormy shore;
Rise where Christ is gone before;
Fear not God himself to see;
Christ, his image, lives in thee.

Face to face, O Father, now
Frowns no more thy starry brow.
Why should we our Maker shun,
Now thy life and ours are one?

Men may dare thy light to scan;
By thee sits the Son of Man:
Men may soar to highest Heaven;
God as man to earth is given.

Thou to us in Christ art come,
Come to call thy children home:
Thou in him hast left the skies,
But that we in him may rise.

The dreamy and monkish oddity of these thoughts struck him as quite unlike anything he had known among intelligent men, and led his thoughts away to the Parsees and Santons of the East, and to one or two strange old fragments of Christian hymns, which he had heard under picturesque and impressive circumstances in Spain and at Jerusalem. Something unusual, he knew not what, seemed clinging to him; and he felt relieved by the entrance of Sir Charles Harcourt, to whom Musgrave had sent tidings of his condition. He had now to shape his story as plausibly as he could, to avoid unnecessary ridicule from his friends. A midnight ramble with the gipsies he could not but acknowledge; and his reputation for hare-brained adventure was well enough established to make anything of the kind credible. Sir Charles promised to send him books, and to come to see him. But Hastings could not help fancying that, under an exterior of the most amicable politeness, his friend was inwardly laughing at him. He felt pleased at his departure, and said to himself, "With all his taste and fashion, he is a poor effeminate creature."

In the afternoon Musgrave came again to see

him. The hymn, and the fancies it had suggested, were seething in his brain; and he felt a little stronger interest than before in the clergyman, who sat beside his bed, and asked if he could render him any service. Hastings thanked him, and said, "No." He then closed his eyes, and added, "It seems very strange to me that I should be here now, with you sitting by me. The last time that I was laid up, it was by a wound received in a lion-hunt among the Caffres. I was confined for three weeks in one of their huts, and attended by a copper-coloured girl, who had never seen another European. She sang the songs of her tribe to me, in a low droning voice, and told me stories of their chases after the camelopard and the rhinoceros. She spoke of their charms against snake-bites and poisoned arrows, and of the powers of their Amakiras or witch-doctors. Then she brought me drink in a calabash, and morsels of broiled antelope, and fanned me with a fan of leaves. Even now, when I shut my eyes, I can hardly help fancying that I am a stranger in that African village; and, when I hear a step at a distance, I have the image of that poor savage girl before me for a moment, though few European footsteps are as light as hers." Musgrave seemed interested, and asked him about his travels, which Hastings spoke of with eagerness and vivacity. As he talked, it seemed the

round green world was spinning under him, while he occupied some starry post, and looking down described each country at the moment that the real map revolved beneath his eye. Cities, nations, landscapes, races of animals, seas of islands, fleets, caravans, and adventures, arose, and shifted, and passed away like dreams.

When he paused, Musgrave looked upward, and then at him, and said in a subdued voice, "In any of your travels, Mr. Hastings, did you ever find peace of mind?"

He was silent for a minute, and then replied; "No, I never sought it; I should not know what to do with it if I had it. But I found ever-varying, never-ceasing excitement; and I suppose that is as much as earth can furnish."

"As much indeed," said Musgrave. "For peace we must look elsewhere."

"To heaven? No doubt. But, while in this state of existence, I take the best that it can supply; and that is movement, change, exertion, enjoyment?"

"If we have not something of heaven even here, I fear we can hope for little of it hereafter. Peace and life are not at war with each other; but each in the highest sense requires and includes the other. Perhaps this is a kind of truth, of which in all your travels you have not experienced the reality."

"Certainly I have never managed to be asleep and awake at the same time."

"Well, if I took your own illustration, I should say that the true peace of the spirit of man is not to be found when it is the slave of its dreams, but when it is the lord of its thoughts. And this is also the state in which it is most conscious of enjoying the deepest and fullest life. But I will not trouble you with disputing. I only wish you would believe that there is one region of human existence, in which you have not yet sufficiently travelled, and which is not the meanest or poorest."

Neither desired to continue the conversation; and Musgrave soon left Hastings to himself.

Chapter XVII.

THAT strange hymn continued to float round his pillow, and the image of the clergyman perpetually returned to him. The traveller felt that, in Musgrave's deep and fervent sincerity of devotion, there was a kind of power by which he had never before been influenced. So, in bodily suffering, in mental disturbance, and in discontent at his own inaction, his life went on from day to day. Sir Charles Harcourt sent him the books he had promised, which were new fashionable novels, and took no hold of his mind. Musgrave passed an hour or two with him daily;

and he could never shake off the impression made by his manner and language. When he found this image wearisome, he could not rid himself of it, as he had been used to do when anything annoyed him, by shooting out into action; for he was confined by his injured limb to the room he had been first placed in. Vexed and fretted at a stillness so unlike his usual life, he became at last thoroughly impatient. One day he gave vent to this feeling in words of something like displeasure, while speaking to Musgrave. The clergyman's pale cheek coloured slightly; and, as was his fashion, he paused for a moment before he spoke. He then said to Hastings, that he feared his society was burthensome, and begged his pardon if it were so, but assured him that he had been in the habit of visiting him only in the hope of being in some way useful or agreeable. The patient felt much ashamed at his own folly, entreated forgiveness, earnestly thanked Musgrave for all his kindness, and begged him to continue his visits as often as might be convenient to him. Indeed, he added, his host's company sometimes gave him a kind of strange obscure pleasure, such as he had never experienced but once before.

"Nine years ago," he said, "I was travelling in Armenia; and the night fell while I was examining some noble ruins on the banks of the Araxes, with the peak of Ararat in view before me. I

secured my horse in a nook of the decayed and shattered buildings, and lay down beside him for the night, when I heard the sound of men's voices at a great distance singing a hymn, which, to my present recollection, had much the rhythm and tone of one that struck me in your hymn-book. The singers were doubtless monks engaged in their evening devotions. I rose and went a few paces in the direction of the sound to listen, when I saw a figure moving among the ruins, as if coming towards me from the river. As he drew nearer leaning on his staff, I saw by the moonlight that he much resembled pictures I have met with of Saint Joseph, the husband of Mary. When close at hand, he looked at me intently, and I felt that I had never seen so venerable a being. He then addressed me in the Armenian tongue, of which I had learnt something from the Mekhitaristes of San Lazaro at Venice; and he said, 'My son, thou seekest many things on earth; but the one thing which thou needest thou seekest not; else wouldst thou find it with less journeying.'

"'And what,' I said, 'Father, is that?'

"'Peace.'

"'Hast thou then found it?'

"'If I knew it not, then, like others, I should not believe in its existence. Farewell. Remember the measure of the divine song thou hast heard, and remember me.'

"He turned away, and was hidden in a moment by a massive pier. The feeling that his presence gave me, I have never experienced since till I met with you."

Musgrave seemed much surprised and confused at this remark; and they parted for the night on very friendly terms. It was now the close of the week, which Hastings had spent in a bodily inactivity hardly ever known to him before. That evening he employed hour after hour in reviewing the innumerable images of the past, which floated before him, and sometimes in forming plans for the future. At last it was deep night; and he heard the clock of the neighbouring church strike twelve. The last stroke had scarcely trembled away over the churchyard, when he recollected the destiny to which he was subject, and saw standing before him, in the brightness of reality, the different beings in whose lot he had so lately shared, — Edmonstone, — Harcourt, — Wilson, — and, lastly, Hastings. As in none of these had he been perfectly happy, and as little in his last character as in any of the former ones, he remembered that the power of the ring was not ended; and with little hesitation he breathed upon it, and named the name of Musgrave.

Chapter XVIII.

MUSGRAVE went through the duties of his station with an exemplary zeal and devotion. But his heart was in his solitude, where in private study, meditation, and prayer, he cherished the mild and musing temper of an eremite. The world that he outwardly lived in lay at a distance from his apprehension; nor was he ever truly at ease and joyous, but when he felt himself in an imaginary heaven, conversing with visionary beings and the transfigured personages of sacred story, or lost in the flaming beatitude of prayer and praise. He was respected and even beloved by his parishioners, but as a creature of another race, a chance visitor to them from a different state of existence. They thought of him less as a better and wiser man, with a true and warm, but ennobled human heart, than as a seraphic phantom always breathing some celestial air, and having, instead of life-blood, an immaterial spirit.

He performed his Sunday duties however with meek and graceful fervour; and the worst and most embruted of those who heard him carried away the impression that he was a sincerely good and godly man. The next day, as indeed almost every day, he spent some hours in visiting different members of his flock. The cottages of the poor opened very various prospects of human life

which, as such merely, had to him little meaning. In all the best, as much as in the worst, he saw only illustrations of the futility of all human efforts, except those which tend to an ascetic and mystical isolation. What interest they excited in him arose from his habit of regarding them, not as men, but as embryo angels. He did not speak their language, nor enter into, though he compassionated, their struggles and sufferings. The gross and violent heard his exhortations like a faint aerial music, sweet and sublime, but remote from all that they valued or dreaded. The better and more thoughtful were bewildered, by feeling that they did not understand or sympathize with him, and that what they found in religion of present support and comfort for their practical life, was to him worthless, if compared to his ideal longings and meditative communion with heaven.

After another day or two he visited the poor-house, where he found a motley collection of young and old, all more or less in some perverse or unhealthy state. Old age in all varieties of feeble, fretful imbecility,—diseases of many and hopeless kinds, palsy, deafness, dumbness, blindness, idiocy,—the maimed, the ulcered, the bed-ridden, the deformed, the doting,—orphans, whom love had never approached,—widows, from whom it had for ever fled away,—the broken in fortune, once rich,—the loathsome, once beautiful,—the

relics of our human life, still invested with ghastly human semblances,—all worn out and sepulchral shadows of what once was man,—all stunted and despised modes of young existence,—all these were here, and each a melancholy portion of a hideous whole. The old and infantile were mixed together; but the aged received no duteous reverence; and the children were regarded with no tender watchfulness. There was a certain dull tranquillity enforced by power, a chill orderly sufficiency of physical necessaries provided by routine, a discipline and economy directed to no higher than an outward end, and animated by no affection. The whole was an image of evil of all kinds, compressed indeed and frozen and benumbed by mere superficial pressure, only leaving the consciousness of unrest and pain, but ready, had the weight been removed, and the machinery for a moment relaxed, to burst out in explosions of rage, hatred, horror, and despair. Here sat an old man, once a wealthy farmer, whom drunkenness had made a pauper, and whose only child, a daughter, had been betrayed by poverty into fatal corruption, and had died an outcast. He looked downward with dim, inflamed eyes, still occupied by the vision of an intoxicating draught, which he could no longer procure. There the widow of a shop-keeper, whom her fierce passions and self-will had goaded to the grave, sat in sullen dignity, dressed with some pretension to superior refine-

ment, and brooding on the injustice of the fate which confined her to such society. Scoffs and fury, when she happened to speak, were the burden of all her language. She had hoarded a single pound for twenty years to purchase a handsomer funeral and better attendance than were provided at the expense of the parish. Among those about her were the drudges who had toiled as the wives of labourers now dead, and the men whose choicest recollections were of years long gone by, when they enjoyed the night of poaching and the ale-house riot. There was the cobbler, disabled by incurable headach, and half-crazed by ill-health and fanaticism, whose sense of the woful present was every now and then brightened by a flashing dream of a golden and vermilion New Jerusalem, and by the assurance of his own immeasurable spiritual superiority to those who had ever been at school: for he was a self-taught theologian, and was even ingenious in his absurdity. Beside him sat the soldier, with one leg and one arm, whose gayest phantasms were of the town he once helped to sack, and of unstinted brandy. Children, moping over some cankered attempt at free and happy sport, slunk in corners, and made their presence known chiefly by an occasional quarrel and shriek. One woman of seventy, who had appeared since ten years old destitute of every faculty but the purely animal ones, now at last, while the clergyman was reading

a chapter of the Scriptures, suddenly woke up at the names of Ruth and Naomi, and began to mutter, in language which she had not used for more than half a century, an account of the last gleaning in which she had shared as a child with her mother. She died before she could be carried into another room. In the midst however of this strange and disordered society, some members of it appeared to enjoy all the happiness of which their poor mutilated natures were now capable; and some eyes of the lighter and more joyous temperaments twinkled with unquenchable good-humour.

In this dreary confusion, where it seemed that Orpheus might have sung, and Moses have legislated, in vain, the benevolence and faith of Musgrave glanced by and vanished without a trace. One glow-worm under the coal-black vault of night, a single candle in the largest, deepest mine, is not more ineffectual. Some indeed, from his soft and delicate ministrations, derived a purblind sense of something like good-will towards them existing somewhere; and even this was a blessing. But he felt himself a wanderer into a region which he did not understand, and where he had no hope of ever finding a solid resting-place for his foot. The butterfly among the rocks of Caucasus might as well have dreamt of sweeping down, before its silken wings, the crag on which the Titan groaned in vain.

Chapter XIX.

MUSGRAVE had twice seen Elizabeth, the daughter of farmer Wilson, in the first week after her return; and now, towards the close of the second, he sat again beside her bed. Maria Lascelles, who was now no longer a visitor at Sir Charles Harcourt's, but living at her uncle's house, a good deal further off, had found out the dying woman, and was with her when Musgrave entered, but rose and went away. He found the sufferer penitent, resigned, and hopeful; and he felt that she comprehended him better than most of those whom he conversed with. She had grown rapidly weaker and nearer to her end; and he expected her speedy departure from the body. She was propped up by pillows in the bed; and her mother sat by her on the opposite side, and attended to all her wants. Musgrave had his back to the window, through which a bright evening light flowed in and fell upon her wasted haggard face, and upon the shrunken hand that lay near him on the bed-clothes. She spoke to him of Maria, and said, "That lady is a great blessing to me; she reads and talks to me for hours; and her visits are like those of a young prophetess. She enters strangely into all I feel, though she can never have had anything like it in herself. And when I say anything of this kind

to her, she only answers that we have all much the same things in our minds, if we would attend to them properly."

"It must be a great pleasure and advantage to you to have such a friend."

"Oh! indeed it is so, sir. I think she has done me more good than any one I ever knew. She sees so well what kind of help I want; and she always tries to make me feel how real and awful our sins are, and then points out how great is the blessing of being relieved from the burthen of them. Oh! she is a good young lady!"

Musgrave listened with much interest, but thought it right to turn the conversation more directly on Elizabeth's own state. He expatiated on the happiness of a future life, the perfect freedom from sorrow and trial, and the luminous and ethereal kind of existence, which is all we can imagine of a perfectly spiritualized being in the unclouded presence of God. She listened with some pleasure: but, though checked in expressing herself, as the poor so often are, by the fear of differing from their superiors, she felt in her heart that what she chiefly wanted was not encouragement of this kind, but that which should strengthen in her the sense of present victory, even in this life, over the pain of actual sinfulness, and the sharp remembrance of many previous offences. So only, she guessed, but hardly dared to say even to herself, could she look forward cheerfully and

on sure grounds to a better and nobler existence hereafter. She took the first opportunity which Musgrave's remarks offered of referring to her husband, and looked at him while she did so with earnest eyes, and spoke with trembling words. Musgrave had known him: but they had never been at all intimate. Her mother left the room to procure some drink for her; and, while she was gone, Elizabeth took from under her pillow a little packet of papers, which she looked at fondly for some seconds, and then held out to Musgrave, saying, "Take these, and read them: they may be of some use to you; for it is necessary to your work that you should understand the thoughts and hearts of men. There are things among them that you will perhaps make out better even than I, who so well knew the writer. It is very sore for me to part with them, now that I am so near the last; but, if they can do any good, it is much better so. You will see that they are much frayed and stained; for I have read them over and over, and have never had them away from my bed. Oh! sir, before he died, he had far better faith and hope than you will find written there. Indeed,—indeed,—with all his faults he was very good; and at the last, when he had suffered so much, and was so anxious about me,—and our—baby,—he was able, he told me, to trust that all was, and would be for the best, and was content to do and suffer whatever

might be the will of God. But I beg your pardon, sir, for troubling you in this way;—only I know you are very kind; and none of them here can understand such things as he thought of. —Oh! no, they never could. He taught me so much, so many,—many things, that I never should have known but for him; and with all my faults, he has made me see everything so differently, somehow as if it were so much larger and brighter than it used to be,—just as different as the inside of a book, full of beautiful writing and pictures, is from the cover outside of it. Oh! my own poor Henry."

She now closed her eyes, exhausted and in tears. Her mother came back and said, "You know, dear, Mr. Musgrave is to give you the sacrament to-day, if you are well enough; and we ought not to keep him."

"Oh, yes, mother, quite well enough for that. I shall be very glad."

The mother called in the others of the family, except James, who was away at work; and they all partook devoutly of the sacred rite. In administering it to Elizabeth, Musgrave felt as if it were a meeting in a world of disembodied spirits. In her a new life seemed for a moment awakened; and she looked more intelligent and lovelier than he had ever seen her. When the others were departing, she signed to them not to go, and looked steadily at each of their faces. She then

cast a long gaze round the room at all the things she knew so well, the cupboard, and the chest of drawers, and the looking-glass that had so often reflected her girlish face, and then at the apple-tree seen through the window, and the bright evening sky beyond. Her eyes turned again to Musgrave, as if thanking him, and reminding him of the papers, and then again fixed on her mother, closed, opened, and turned once more to the same wrinkled face, over which the tears were now falling. She said, "Dear mother and father, and all, and James too, if he were here, I wish I could tell you how I love you all, and how happy I am in the thought that you love me, and will learn more and more to love God." The flush deepened over her cheeks,—faded,—returned,—faded again,—and her eyes grew dim, and her lips white;—but they still murmured, "I wish I could spread out my arms, and take up the whole world, and bring them to Christ." She ceased to look or speak, but soon again opened her eyes on her mother. "Kiss me, mother, I cannot speak; but I am quite happy, quite. I am going to my husband, and my poor baby, and God, who is all in all. Good-by, dear friends,—good—good-by. I shall never see Burntwood again,—but"—and she was gone from earth.

Chapter XX.

HENRY'S PAPERS.

HOW hard a work is life! The system of things which I live in lays certain unceasing tasks on me, but gives me no sufficient strength to fulfil them. The strong gladiator drags me into the arena of struggle that we call the world; and then and there it strikes and bruises me, and compels me to fight, yet with the certainty that I must be overcome and die. This very system awakens the feeling in me that I am fit for something better. It gives me a sense of peace, which it will not let me realize. Like a divine muse, it sings a song of mercy and hope into my heart, and at the same time rends and strangles me with the talons of a fury.

I have been twenty-three years in this visible world. For seven, partly from the foolish affection of others, partly from their selfish carelessness, I suffered evils that I did not understand; and my gratifications were slight and baseless. Yet, in looking back even on this early part, it wears a certain brightness, which it never had in the reality: pleasures, that were trivial in the enjoyment, seem sublime in the retrospect. Whence then comes the sublimity? It must be from my

present self, from the creative power of my feelings and imagination. Yet this grandeur, which I am able to extend over the images of the past, when I would grasp and embody it as an actual good, fades and vanishes; only the Distant shines; the Near is pale and gloomy. Thus all we see of beauty and bliss is the feast of Tantalus, which melts in the infernal air when we approach. My boyhood was a time of strong and conscious growth. But I had the pains of the process, and never have known its peaceful fruits. I enlarged my knowledge of Nature and its forms, and increased my love of them. But that passion, ardent and tender at the first, and yielding many delightful hopes, has always ended in sorrow. The Nymphs have all in turn shrunk beneath their waters and into their caves, and left the enamoured boy to stare at the blank solitude. The enthusiasm of youthful hope and belief, kindled in the awakening consciousness by the shapes of Life and Reality, never finds a future adequate to its demands. It merely enlarges the heart to hold a larger portion of disappointment. Now that I am a man, I have faculties indeed, which enable me to discern the principles of things, and to embody these in lively images, and to devise lines of extensive action. But my heart is wearied and saddened by ill success; I want a field of movement, and languish without sympathy from those around me. I have a pupil

whom I must teach, but who will hardly learn, and employers or patrons, who regard me as the menial groom of their favourite and costly horse. They would not give a shilling to save the servant's life, but a hundred pounds to rescue that of the animal.

Verily it seems to me that the Life we know is all a delusion. We sometimes pierce the covering, and find blackness and hollowness within. We are told indeed, that inside there is I know not what treasure,—a gem, a light, an eye, a magical remedy. But may not this too be a delusion? Who knows? I have seen a French sugar-plum-box with a picture of a watch upon the cover, to indicate that there was a watch within; but, on opening it, the watch was found to be of painted and gilt sugar, as false as the outward image. It is the cry of moralists, and the curse of our nature, that all fair things seen by man turn into clay, and lastly he himself.

The adaptation, so often trumpeted, of man to the system of nature is, I think, at best but as the relation of a line to its parallel. Their very parallelism secures that they shall never meet. Man works on wheels; but these cannot get into the grooves they seem designed for, and can only move outside of them in the irregular rut which they have broken for themselves.

Human life evidently has desires, which human life can never satisfy. What is the remedy for this evil? Apparently none is possible. The very terms seem to involve a hopeless contradiction. It is said indeed, that faith in God helps us out of the difficulty, and raises man above himself. But, when I ask my teacher what he means by the Deity, I either receive no answer, or worse than none. One says, the Creator of all things. But this tells me nothing of the kind of Being who created all. The rat that lurks in the crannies of a castle, and is hunted and laid wait for daily, learns little to gratify its soul, if told that the architect of the castle formed the rat-holes, no less than the rat-traps, and even took pains to stock them with his progenitors. Another talks to me of the Life and Ground of all things. But this gives me scanty help; for of all things I best know myself. It is by looking within, therefore, that I can find the most intelligible specimen and example of that All, of which I am referred to the Cause and the Vital Principle. From this quarter then,—namely, my own consciousness of myself,—I must derive my view of the character of the Primordial Power. Now it is my own consciousness, which is sick, suffering, plague-stricken; and it is from its miseries that I am directed to take refuge in that Divine Idea, which is yet so plainly shown to be itself

wounded with the some weapon, and infected by the same poison. It is the very malady and desperation of all within me, which leads me to seek help from something outward. If that Outward be but a repetition of the Interior Existence, magnified in the concave mirror of the Universe, all its distortions and scars, its blood and tears and steel-spiked crown, are also reflected and enlarged there. If again I am sent to the Bible, I see indeed clearly enough, that, what I will not call the Jupiter of that Iliad, but the Fate of that high Hebrew Tragedy, would condemn and punish me for not being other than I am. But how I shall become other, how be fashioned by that standard, seems to me as vain an enquiry, as how the flying-fish can change itself into the dolphin which pursues it, and so find refuge in the waters. Finally, miracles are no evidence to him, who has no clear conception of the Being they are said to proceed from; and, even if they were, they would go to establish a system, which, from the inconformity of my mind to its principles, leaves me an outcast, or makes me a victim.

I cannot recognise myself, or my experience of life, in the Sacred Records. When I read them I find myself travelling in an enchanted region, that has almost nothing in common with my accustomed country. There is little in it

that joins on to anything pre-existent in me. I acknowledge indeed here a rich and profuse beauty, as in fairy pictures;—there, a dreary awful power, as in Druidical or Egyptian remains; wonders again, as unprepared and incoherent as those of dreams; lastly, gushes of human feeling and strains of thought, which really seem to belong to the same nature as mine, but which stand in no close or necessary relation to the loftier, stranger, more oracular portions. I can as little enter into the old Hebrew's views of divine and human things, as he, could he now revive, would comprehend my feelings as to nature, art, and man. His world is indeed a land of marvels, many of them lovely, and many expressive, but all shut up within a circuit of huge walls. It seems to me the chief of all confounding paradoxes, that so many millions of men, in times and modes so different from these, should fancy the grey and thundering cloud of that old Eastern Theocracy can remain built up like a Cyclopian wall in our freer calmer sky.

In the family I live in, there is no one who has the smallest notion that my opinions differ at all from their own, and from those of the clergyman of the parish. There is no one of them who could ever be brought to understand the least portion of my views. Now if, as I

cannot but suppose, there are many other instances of the same entire misconception as to the characters and thoughts of those we live with daily, what a world of secret and unguessed life must be concealed within that which is palpable and common-place! How many hidden treasure-chambers, forgotten graves, buried habitations, and inurned yet beating hearts, must lie under the soil which the feet of busy men hourly and so heedlessly travel over! Perhaps the world would gain, were it to unknow all it knows, provided it could also learn all it does not know. The common, the public, the familiar, is the product of chance, interest, indifference, fraud. The hidden and personal, that which he who possesses it shrinks from casting into the open mud-pool of society, is the growth of inward feeling and reflection, the winnings of earnest endeavour. We wrap up and conceal the sacred spoils that are stained with the dear blood we have shed in gaining them; but we hawk in open baskets the pebbles, shells, and weeds, which all may gather by the highwayside, or on the bare and trodden sand of the frequented bay. The rush and throng of life are for ever driving back into cells and nooks, whatever would come forth of independent, genuine, peculiar. The light, easy, empty, popular, is received into the kindred element, is borne along with and swells the mass. Thus what each successive generation has added

to the world's possessions is probably but the husks and scum of its existence; while whatever has been truly noble and severe, was sunk and lost, with or before its creators. Could the figures in the apparent picture of history be suddenly effaced, and the glass they are painted on be made transparent, so as to show the reality it now hides, how completely might our views of all things and ourselves be reversed and transmuted! We should see perhaps, in many a family of those poor barbarians whom Cæsar slaughtered by myriads, more dignity, sensibility, genuine sense of nature and power, than in the accomplished, radiant emperor. Knowing how in myself what is deep, arduous, and high-minded shrinks from view, and all that is imitative, hollow, selfish, and sequacious lies on the surface, or rather forms it, may I not believe that the like is true of the world and all its history?

To-day is likely to be a memorable one for me. I was wandering some miles from the house, while my pupil was gone on a pleasure party with the family in another direction. At last I came out of a lane upon a farm-house with a little garden in front of it, in which a young woman was tying up the flowers. She had a singularly soft and still manner of moving, such as indicated a quiet and harmonious life, and gave her more the air of a lady than most ladies

that I have seen. I went up to speak to her, and asked where I was, and what would be my shortest way back, when I saw her face more distinctly, her mild features, and clear blue eyes. She answered me in a low sweet voice, gravely but pleasantly, when an old man came out of the house, whom I found to be her father, and whom I remembered to have seen two or three times at my employer's, the squire's, where he had come on justice business as an overseer of the poor. I recollected that his name was Wilson; and on my speaking to him and saying where I lived, he asked me in. The daughter had gone before; and I willingly agreed. The family and the house have alike an appearance of simplicity and peace at once strange and delightful to me. When I think of the restless pretensions and the discontent of those I live among, the contrast becomes very striking. I spent a quarter of an hour in the house; and, when I was returning through the woods and fields, the figure of Elizabeth seemed always flitting before me, yet with her face turned towards mine, and with her bright and gentle eyes and calm smile loooking at me from between the trees and above the hedge-rows. I could not walk steadily, but jumped and ran, and every now and then stood still, the more clearly to recall her image. I, who seldom am able to pray, caught myself exclaiming,—"O God! hast thou at last sent

me a being, whom I may love, and who may one day love me?"

I have now seen Elizabeth many times. Her whole life and culture have had but the two elements, the domestic and the Biblical. Yet to how complete and melodious, nay, sometimes how high and lyrical a being has she attained! She knows little indeed; but she has the most open, the freshest, and the truest sense for whatever is natural and worthy. While with her, and thinking no longer of speculations, or of myself, I feel as if I had thrown off a stiff and heavy armour, which I had worn for years, and been clad of a sudden in soft and lucid silken robes. Oh, how divine is the blessedness of love! It leaves me no fear and regrets. I feel that life is indeed a capacity for joy, and is nothing else. All besides is but the pain and struggle through which that capacity is unfolded. She, without designing it, has opened my heart to see and feel goodness and beauty in every thing around me. Nay, strangest of all, when I read the Bible with her, and see how its morality and devotion and multitudinous imagery have passed into and become portions of her heart, I seem to perceive that the Deity may be beheld immediately and acknowledged, as we discern and own what is excellent in a human being, and feel it a villany to ask how

we can prove such and such a pure and heroic man not to be a mere cheat and quack. Much indeed is still dark; but I can now conceive it to be transitory and hopeful darkness; for what once was darkest of all, my own being and affections, is now bright and benignant. I now know that to believe is nobler than to theorize, and to act more profitable than to murmur. I dare not complain of the seemingly inexplicable contradictions of Existence, while I am not guiding my own in the path which opens before me. I cannot see its termination; but I do see the portion nearest to me, which must at all events be first travelled over; and, as I do not see the end, I know not but that it may issue in the solution of all my difficulties. There is a road of action guiding me I know not precisely whither; and there must be somewhere, though I know not precisely where, an outlet from the labyrinth of speculation. One therefore of these mysteries may turn out to be the solution of the other. Nay, if all Life be not a hopeless, planless Chaos, I dare affirm that so it must be. And that our mortal state is not such, and so darkly bewildered, my hopes, my sympathies, my exulting joy, my sense of liberation in the love of Elizabeth are to me abundant proof. The God of the Bible, and the God of the Universe, I now divine afar off, may be known as One. But I am sure that

to know Him at all, except by guess, I must resolve to do my work within his world, rather than to speculate about Him.

Chapter XXI.

HENRY'S PAPERS.—(*Continued.*)

I HAVE lately been interested by meeting with the following poem by Walsingham.

THE WOODED MOUNTAINS.

Woodland Mountains, in your leafy walks
Shadows of the Past and Future blend:
Mid your verdant windings flits or stalks
Many a loved and disembodied friend.

With your oaks and pine-trees' ancient brood,
Spirits rise above the wizard soil;
And with these I roam amid the wood:
Man may dream on earth no less than toil.

Shapes that seem my kindred, meet the ken;
Gods and heroes glimmer through the shade;
Ages, long gone by from haunts of men,
Meet me here in rocky dell and glade.

There the Muses, touched with gleams of light,
Warble yet from yonder hill of trees;
And upon the huge and mist-clad height
Fancy sage a clear Olympus sees.

'Mid yon utmost peaks the elder Powers
Still unshaken hold their fixed abode,
Fates primeval throned in airy towers,
That with morning sunshine never glowed.

Deep below, amid a hell of rocks,
Lies the Cyclops, and the Dragon coils,
Heaving with the torrent's weary shocks,
That around the untrodden region boils.

But more near to where our Thought may climb,
In a mossy, leaf-clad Druid ring,
Three grey shapes, prophetic Lords of Time,
Homer, Dante, Shakspeare sit and sing.

Each in turn his descant frames aloud,
Mingling new and old in ceaseless birth,
While the Destinies hear amid their cloud,
And accordant mould the flux of earth.

O! ye trees that wave and glisten round,
O! ye waters gurgling down the dell,
Pulses throb in every sight and sound,
Living Nature's more than magic spell.

Lo! amid the vista still and dim,
Knights whom youth's high heart forgetteth not,
Each with scars and shadowy helmet grim,
Amadis, Orlando, Lancelot.

Stern they pass along the twilight green,
While within the tangled wood's recess,
Some lorn damsel sits, lamenting keen,
With a voice of tuneful amorousness;

Clad in purple weed, with pearly crown,
And with golden hairs that waving play,
Fairest earthly sight for King and Clown,
Oriana or Angelica.

But in sadder nooks of deeper shade
Forms more subtle lurk from human eye,
Each cold Nymph, the rock or fountain's maid,
Crowned with leaves that sunbeams never dry.

And while on and on I wander still,
Past the plashing streamlet's glance and foam,
Hearing oft the wild-bird pipe at will,
Still new openings lure me still to roam.

In this hollow smooth, by May-tree walled,
White and breathing now with fragrant flower,
Lo! the fairy tribes, to revel called,
Start in view as fades the evening hour.

Decked in rainbow woof of gossamer,
And with many a sparkling jewel bright,
Rose-leaf faces, dew-drop eyes are there,
Each with gesture fine of gentle sprite.

Gay they woo, and dance, and feast, and sing;
Elfin chants and laughter fill the dell,
As if every leaf around should ring
With its own aërial emerald bell.

But for man 'tis ever sad to see
Joys like his that he must not partake,
'Mid a separate world, a people's glee,
In whose hearts his heart no joy could wake.

Fare-ye-well, ye tiny race of elves;
May the moon-beam ne'er behold your tomb!
Ye, our happiest childhood's other selves,
Bright to you be always evening's gloom.

And thou, mountain realm of ancient wood,
Where my feet and thoughts have strayed so long,
Now thy old gigantic brotherhood
With a ghostlier vastness round me throng.

Mound, and Cliff, and Crag that none may scale,
With your serried trunks and wrestling boughs,
Like one living presence ye prevail,
And o'erhang me with Titanian brows.

In your Being's mighty depth of Power,
Mine is lost, and melted all away.
In your forms involved I seem to tower,
And with you am spread in twilight grey.

In this knotted stem whereon I lean,
And the dome above of countless leaves,
Twists, and swells, and frowns a life unseen,
That my life with it resistless weaves.

Yet, O Nature, less is all of thine,
Than thy borrowings from our human breast;
Thou, O God! hast made thy child divine,
And for him his world thou hallowest.

Hark! a sound of mortal feet is nigh;
'Tis the pattering of a youthful tread;
'Tis the woodman's daughter tripping by
With a pitcher to her native shed.

There, beside the fearless child, I wend,
And rejoice beneath a human roof;
And our mingling nightly prayers ascend
With the cottage smoke to Heaven aloof.

The effect of these papers on Musgrave's mind was very strong. He had hardly ever read anything not in conformity with his own habits of mind and opinions. From all books beyond his favourite circle, consisting of such works as A-Kempis, Jeremy Taylor, Herbert, and Fenelon, he turned away with indifference or dislike. His was a sort of unchanging moonshine of the mind. Now he felt as if thrown into a dungeon, with a dim lamp burning on one side, and a single sharp ray of sunlight piercing on the other.

Much that appeared in Henry's papers, he could not at all enter into. But he saw enough to understand that his own previous world was a smaller one than he had imagined. Without losing his faith in the great truths, which he had never for an instant of his life permitted himself to doubt, he now felt the sphere of his conceptions suddenly and painfully enlarged, and an unexpected importance given to thoughts, which had hardly before suggested themselves to him. He had not read Walsingham's Poems; and the one which he had now lighted on excited a new interest in him. It exhibited a composure of mind, which he had fancied impossible unless connected with his own opinions; and at the same time, having read very little poetry, he fancied he found in it a free and clear painting of many images drawn from nature, and a steady, untremulous self-consciousness, which, as thus united together, and not derived exclusively from religious devotion, seemed to him very wonderful. It may thus become intelligible, that, when the fated hour arrived, and Arthur could look back on Edmonstone, Harcourt, Wilson, Hastings, and Musgrave, as so many distinct selves, he turned from them all, and hoped to rise on bolder wings, and command a wider air, when he elected to assume the being of Walsingham.

Chapter XXII.

EXTRACTS FROM MARIA'S NOTE-BOOK.

WALSINGHAM has now been here on a visit for two days. I am not sure, but I suspect, that he plotted to induce my aunt to invite him; and, although it seems absurd, I can now hardly help fancying that it was on my account he wished to come. I cannot see him without interest and a certain pleasure. But I find that this feeling is always accompanied by dissatisfaction, and almost by self-reproach, when it is not justified by an equal sense of reliance and reverence. His sympathies seem to me kind and right, and wonderfully impartial and comprehensive; and of his talents and accomplishments there can, I suppose, be no doubt. But I cannot shake off the persuasion that there is something wanting in him to gain my full admiration and esteem. I can imagine that a person who had never beheld a complete Gothic cathedral, might see a beautiful tower of such a building, massive and profusely ornamented, and in which all that had ever been begun was quite finished, and yet feel something to be wanting, though he might not be able to tell that it was the sky-pointing spire which ought to have crowned the tower. As to Walsingham, however, it may be altogether a

mistake of mine; and no doubt it seems more probable that I am in error than he.

Oh, how hard it is to keep one's life at once clear, full, fresh, and steady! How I find myself wavering into sickly fancies, indulging selfish humours, repining at my situation, as if it were not a necessary portion of my existence, and as if that were not on the whole a blessing. My God! strengthen me. The image of Arthur has darkened, even saddened my mind. But for how much hope, energy, feeling, am I not also indebted to him! I look upon the stars, or into the calm depth of pure waters, and I seem to know then that, although here and now we are divided, there is some distant imperishable world, in which our spirits ever dwell together. Meanwhile the past lies wide and dark behind me. The future moves onward with swift feet; and its footsteps on that field of still smoking ashes are what we call the present. Dear, dear, Arthur! though I cannot see you, nor even hear of you, some day of unclouded revelation will surely come, when you will know how fondly and devotedly I compare your deep, though often troubled, struggling earnestness, with this cold, far-glancing, many-sided, self-idolizing, consummate artist.

I am unjust to Walsingham. No man could

so well understand and tolerate all kinds of characters, even the most unlike his own, nay, even the poor, foolish, painful mimicries of himself, without a long and hard self-sacrificing discipline. There is nothing, I find, that he so thoroughly hates as the coarse, tawdry finery of the English upper classes, unaccompanied, as it so often is, by any true refinement, or sense of the beautiful. But I think that, when this better taste exists, he is inclined to overlook much of moral evil in its favour, and even a good deal of heartless selfishness. When this tendency of his breaks out, I shrink away from him. But then again my admiration is recalled by his sensibility to every form of power and loveliness, by his insight into the real substance of all the kinds of human life we meet with, and his capacity of divining the history of each, and rounding off its destiny into a clear and expressive whole. Sometimes for a few moments I seem borne upwards on his eagle wings, and feel long after as if he had placed me on a mighty mountain-head, whence, in bright sunshine and keen blue air, I can behold the great and living mass of Nature and Mankind. Dare I ask myself whether I could be content to dwell with him upon that summit? It is too late to doubt whether I shall ask the question. Arthur, forgive me! But I am clear as to the answer.—No,—Oh, No. May God forbid! Rather let me live in the darkest, rudest

valley, where I may be strengthened and guided by one true, warm, wise heart; where I should not only understand and mould to imagery all the beings round me, but where they might feel that I loved them, and was struggling onward with them, to do whatever good we knew, at whatever sacrifice.

Walsingham puzzles me more and more. I cannot be mistaken as to the interest he feels in me, and the pleasure he has in my society. I too enjoy the perpetual flow of animated and graceful thoughts, which breaks from him on all occasions, and with reference to every little outward object, —a plant, a bird, a shower, a village-wedding. Now and then he expresses in a few words what seems to throw a wondrous light over whole regions of one's life. As this,—*a large mind, which cannot tolerate small ones, is smaller than if it could.* Or this,—*when we feel strongly and mysteriously as to the past, we should remember that all which seems strangest in our consciousness may arise, not from the past that it relates to, but from the present that it subsists in.* Or this,—*Rochefoucald's maxims are a true picture, not of human nature, but of its selfishness. He works like a painter who paints the profile, and chooses the side of the face in which the eye is blind and deformed, instead of the other which is unblemished. Yet the picture may be a most accurate copy.*

Or this,—*the wider the base of life, the higher may we hope to raise the summit.* Numberless more of such remarks has he let fall in the three days he has been here, and chiefly when conversing with me. Yet there is nothing pedantic or sententious in his tone. He is easy and playful, though earnest; and these sayings, and others like them, have only come out as explanations of some casual remark which had interested me, and on which I had wished for more light. But this man becomes on occasion quite a different being, and one with whom I cannot sympathize at all. Thus, we had Mrs. —— yesterday at dinner, and staying till to-day, an airy, sparkling creature, fond of admiration, very good-natured, and skimming through life like a butterfly. Walsingham seemed much amused by her, and paid her a great deal of attention. I am certain she could not understand him in his more serious moments. But the odd thing was, that, seeing him with her, no one could have suspected him of ever having any serious moments. She was singing, and exclaimed, "What stupid words these are! I cannot sing them! and yet the tune is very pretty. Do give me something better for it?" She held out her ivory tablets to him with a coquettish smile, and said, "Do, I should so like it." He took them from her laughing, and said, "Mind you promise to sing the lines;" and in ten minutes he gave her

the verses called *Sappho*, which, the next morning, while I was out of the room, she copied, as a piece of mischief, into my Album.

By the noontide heat oppressed,
Sappho in a cave would rest.
Rose and bay-tree hedged it round;
Violets covered all the ground.

But within the twilight shade,
Lo! a lovely boy was laid,
Who in deepest calm reposed,
With his wings of purple closed.

Pleased, afraid, she knew not why,
With a fond and dreaming sigh,
Down she sank beside the child,
Who, in sleep rejoicing, smiled.

O'er the imp an arm she threw,
Daintiest arm of whitest hue;
He towards her bosom crept,
Though it seemed that still he slept.

To her beating heart he clung,
Like a bee the flowers among;
And one throbbing music played
Through the veins of child and maid.

On her eyelids smooth and sweet,
Sleep came down with presence fleet:
How could sleep delay to rest
In so soft and fair a nest?

Then upon her soul arose
Wondrous visionary shows,—
Manly locks, heroic eyes,
With a voice of songs and sighs.

In the wooded vale it seemed,
That the new-sprung godhead beamed,
Come to woo her from above,
Veiling all his power in love.

How the hours had passed away,
Dreaming Sappho could not say;
But she woke alone, and found
Evening floating o'er the ground.

Weeping, drooped the lonely maid,
And with inward moan she said,
"Boy, a double rest was thine,
For thou leav'st me nought of mine."

Mrs. ——— ran through this poem merrily for several stanzas; and, while she sang, there was a droll indefinable smile about the corners of her mouth, which I could not make out. But before she had done, she shook her pretty bright head, with all its fair ringlets waving round it, and said, "O! I can never get through all that." She then gave him an arch glance, and ran off from the piano to me, saying, "Dear Miss Lascelles, what bores Sapphos, and Madame de Staels, and all such people must have been. Do let us have some rational talk about fashions and fiddlesticks and anything useful." Walsingham took up a book; and his whole look changed to one that would suit my notion of Plato or Pythagoras, and this evidently quite unconsciously. Mrs. ——— could not keep her eyes off him long; and after a quarter of an hour

she made some excuse for moving. I saw her pass near him and say something laughingly. But he looked up with a face of such entire thoughtful abstraction, that she started away as if she had seen a skeleton-head. Soon however he smiled, answered her, and then came away and talked to me about Albert Durer's Prayer-book, which I was looking at.

Chapter XXIII.

SUCH were the terms on which Maria and Walsingham stood together, when Mrs. Nugent proposed that she and they should ride in the evening, after an early dinner, to a ruined church a few miles off, from which there was said to be a very beautiful prospect. They set out more than an hour before sunset, and designed to return by moonlight. Mr. Nugent, who was indolent, and cared nothing for any prospects but those of his own pedigree, rent-roll, and dinner-table, said he had letters to write, and staid at home. Two or three of his guests also remained. But the riding party set out in high spirits, followed by a single servant, and passed quickly through the green lanes, till they began to reach the higher and more broken ground of heathy hills. Here they came to a farm-house, where Mrs. Nugent, a notable visitor and adviser of

her inferior neighbours, said she must go in to see the farmer's wife, but would soon catch them by a shorter road than that which, for the sake of the view, was to be pursued by them. The others accordingly rode on. Maria knew that the good lady's habits of delaying and gossiping would probably detain her longer than she expected. But she could not change her aunt's arrangements, and went forward without objection.

"Not far," said Maria, "from the point we are approaching, lives the man we have before spoken of, the hermit Collins. I have seen him often; and, strange as he is, I like him very much. There is such thorough honesty about him, as well as so much queer uncouth kindness, that he interests me extremely. He is the most marked and original figure I have ever heard of in modern England. Whatever is usual and commonplace among us seems to have influenced him only by contraries, and called out nothing but opposition."

"All that," answered Walsingham, "is very foolish, or at least very imperfectly wise. In every age there is good enough, if a man will put himself into harmony with it, to enable him to produce more good out of it. If he does not, he defrauds his time of what he owes to it; and above all he keeps his own mind in a perpetual aimless fervent of antipathy. Kicking out behind

is not the way to move forward, either for horse or man. And then what an absurd dream, to fancy that the good in any man has grown up so independently of all around him, as to have nothing outward with which to connect itself! No, no, we are not thrown down out of the sky like meteoric stones, but are formed by the same laws and gradual processes as all about us, and so are adapted to it all, and it to us. But, no doubt, Collins will fight his way through his present angry element to peace and activity. What employment has he now?"

"He minds his bee-hives. To the few people he ever sees, he talks quaintly and vigorously, I sometimes think, wildly; but all he says has a strong stamp upon it, and never could pass from hand to hand without notice. After having heard him, some of his phrases keep ringing in one's ears, as if he had sent a goblin trumpeter to haunt one with the sound for days and nights after. But I have always felt that he has more in his mind than ever comes out in the expression; and odd as his talk is, I should hardly call it affected or conceited."

"Ah! no doubt there must be much genuine nature there. But, although these vehement lava-lumps and burning coals of his may be no mere showy firework, and do shoot out from a hot central furnace, I would rather it were so much cool clear water, pouring from an inward lake of freshness."

"I can fancy him saying,—the All is right. There must be a Fire-God, as well as a Water-God. If there were no fire-forces seething and blasting, for aught you know the fountains and flood-forces would stagnate into slime. I heard him say something like this when I last saw him."

"All very true. But I stoop to drink of the stream; and I hasten away from the eruption."

"In this case," replied Maria, laughing, "the eruption saves you the trouble. It seeks no one, and loves its solitude."

In half an hour after parting from Mrs. Nugent, they had climbed a sort of pass between two hills, and then turned to one side, so as to gain the summit of the ridge. There was nothing between them and the sea, but a wide and easy descent ending in level ground. Hardly a house was in sight for many miles. Broad tracts of heath, mingled with furze and broom, all in full flower, and here and there with patches of timber, covered the long and weary fore-ground, which sloped away into fields and meadows, divided by hedgerows, and dotted with sheep and cattle. A small town was visible several miles off on the shore. The sea lay shining under a blood-red sun, which had nearly set amid the rose-red sky. Above the sun a dark cloud hung distinct and swollen as a black mantle; but the glaring light blazed around the spectators, and illuminated one

side of the old church, which stood about a mile from them on the same ridge. The portion of it towards the east looked cold and gloomy, while the hot light poured through two or three windows, and defined the whole dark outline against the sky.

They had hardly gazed for a few seconds, before the black cloud spread rapidly with its smoking edges over a third of the heavens, and some heavy drops of rain fell. Walsingham looked at Maria; and she said, "Let us make haste to the church; there is no nearer shelter." She turned her horse in that direction; and, riding fast, they reached the broken walls of the small green enclosure in which the ruin stood, before much rain had fallen. They pushed through one of the gaps, gained the porch, and dismounted. The door was not locked; and they entered the building, and tied their horses to an old iron stancheon in the wall. A stone-bench still remained under the spire of the church, on which Maria sat down, while Walsingham stood beside her. The eastern window, at the other end of the church, was in a great degree blocked up by rubbish and ivy; but through it was seen the grey sky, with a streak or two of faint red. The western window, near them, was quite open; and between its shafts they saw the dark and stormy landscape, the sea angry and labouring under the heavy sky,

yet kindled here and there with flamelike rays, and the broad fierce sun balancing its crimson orb for a moment on the perilous edge of the horizon.

They gazed in earnest delight: but the sharp glare which struck upon Maria's eyes, compelled her to raise her hand before her face. Walsingham stood confronting the violent and resplendent hour, while the glory upon his marble face was met by more than answering power from within. She looked at him with admiration from behind her hand, now tinged to a transparent pink; and she thought that, if, as she believed, his life were far too statuesque and coldly predetermined, yet intelligence and sensibility could never have been invested with a nobler form. At this instant the lightning flashed and filled the church; the thunder broke in a long peal. The sun seemed to have dropped like a flag at the signal, and barely burnt above the sea with a hand's breadth of intense radiance. A crash of rain came down upon the building. Walsingham turned composedly to Maria, and seated himself beside her. "This scene," he said, "is worth some inconvenience. I fear, had you expected it, you would have stayed at home. It would have been an additional inducement to me to come here."

"I should hardly have been allowed to choose; but I am not sorry for the event."

The wind rose high, and dashed the rain in noisy bursts about the ruin. The neighbouring old beech-trees roared. The sound of the sea was not audible; but a vague roll of white and black confusion showed its tumult even at a distance. A glimmer of the sunset still played over it, though the sun was now drowned out. The greatness of the powers at work stirred and enlarged the two beholders with a grave joy. They felt themselves rise and expand with the strong elements.

"One feels now," said Walsingham, "what life there is in nature; and our feeling shows how deeply it is involved with our life, how inseparably its powers are one with those we wield and are conscious of. Almost, we dare to say, with every gust and peal, these efforts of the universe have their impulsions from our breasts: so mightily do sympathy and abounding imagination gush with them from within us."

"The storm is very grand," she said; "but I feel as if I should yield to its grasp, and lose myself in its vastness, if there were not a sense of religion, which the sublime struggle awakens in me, but which raises me above it to God."

He did not answer her directly. But soon she heard him repeating, as if rather to himself than to her,—

> Ye demon winds that fill the vault of air
> And caves of earth with uproar Sibylline,

On whose dark blasts the Fates let loose their hair,
Amid the thunder-clouds to stream and twine,
Rage on, huge spirits, wildly as ye can!
Yet nobler tempest swells the soul of man.

They were both silent for some moments, when the lightning again broke in terrible beauty; and, before the swift sound followed, they saw the ruin and each other's faces in a blaze of light, and land and sea swept over by the meteoric burst, and in the distant depth a vessel reeling and crouching under the tempest. Involuntarily she grasped his arm. She had never felt so intimately attracted to him, as when he laid his hand on hers, and returned her trembling pressure.

"It is the hour," he said, "of the Spirits; but one cannot wish it otherwise, or that we were away from here."

"I feel that God is here, but——as if he did not reach so far as that poor ship."

"He is there too," replied Walsingham in a voice almost as low as hers, "but most, doubtless, with those who believe in Him."

The horses were uneasy and frightened at the storm; and the poet said, after a pause,—"Those animals feel only apprehension. We can admire and enjoy the hour. So much nearer do we lie to the source of all things, at which, could we quite attain to it, all would appear in perfect harmony."

"How noble," exclaimed Maria, "are these organ tones, so infinitely deep, of the vast air, while in the midst of them we hear so many broken sounds, some whispers even, like voices of living hearts, filling the whole tempest, and modulating every breath of it!"

Her hand now lay calmly in his; and he could feel its quiet pulsation. His own beat more hurriedly,—excited, not by the tempest, but by her. "Yes," he said, "not only the ethereal powers are working with fresh energies around us;—but the spirits in ourselves,—and how many are there, each claiming in turn to be our true self, which no one of them is, but all of them together,—are awakened and busy in such an hour, strong with more than common life. Nor can they stir and throng, without calling round them the other spirits of the past and present, perhaps of the future, and of all beings with whom our hearts have ever held true communion. It is the graves themselves which are dead; and the dead live triumphantly around us."

His sweet and steady voice flowed clear and low amid the clang and discord of the winds and rain, and wrought with the hour itself like an enchantment in the ears of Maria. She pressed the hand which held hers, and, looking at the other hand, said to him in a deep whisper, "How that ring of yours glitters in the darkness! I too feel as if there were a wondrous life and

spiritual presence around us. But for weeks past I have had something of this feeling, and more than ever since you have been staying with us. It is now a month since I have heard anything of a dear friend; and his image has been haunting me at intervals all the time."

She felt his hand relax, and that he trembled while she spoke. She too now trembled; for never to any one before had she spoken of her love. But the previous idea still possessed her; for the potent strife of nature had elevated and freed her soul, and broken down many an old barrier of reserve.

"Often," she continued, "and especially when you are with me, he walks visibly before me, and turns his head as if to look at me, but never so much that I can catch his eye. There," she cried, "there,—now he sees me!" and she drew her hand away convulsively, and pointed into the darkness. A keen flash now came, and showed Walsingham that there was no one where she had looked. The astounding thunder followed; and Maria, at the same time, leant back with a long sigh. Walsingham too was much agitated; for what he thus learnt of Maria's affections bitterly disappointed him; but he commanded himself sternly. Another flash now spread around them; and the thunder followed so rapidly as to show how near the explosion was; but, before it was heard, she had

again opened her eyes; and both she and her companion once more saw the fated ship, which now lay stripped and dismasted, and seeming to take its final plunge into the deep. They kept their eyes fixed upon the spot; but, even when some fainter electric lights played over the view, the sea was now invisible through the black sheets of rain. The streams from the steeple above them, and from the remaining portions of the roof, were heard rushing down with a continuous uproar; while the rattle and the murmur of the rain spread all around; and the wind howled and bellowed, as if the universe were given over to its wrath. Except during the moments of the lightning, it had long been pitch-dark. Maria felt that she could speak more boldly, than if she had been seen by Walsingham; and she said in a low voice, "I have been talking very wildly; but this tempest had filled me with strange and stirring thoughts; and I felt as if we knew each other better than I should ever have believed otherwise."

"Dear Friend!" he answered gently and sadly, "such hours set afloat much that was aground, and open much that was closed. What wonder, when such blasts are beating on the gates of our caverns, that they should burst open, and apparitions of long-hidden truth come out, and leap with inspired frenzy! When the storm passes,

the dark gates close anew, and the shapes sink back into their cells, perhaps for ever. To-morrow we shall wake as inhabitants of calm day-light; the involuntary and painful disturbance will have ceased; and the sense of what has been will remain as lasting joy and strength."

Quiet passed into her bosom with his words; and she took his hand again: but scarcely had he received and returned this token of good-will, when they were both smitten by a fearful shock. Their eyes seemed seared and blinded, and their ears filled with an overwhelming noise. The air they breathed was thick with dust, and tasted sulphureous. For some seconds the monstrous clamour continued, and the racking bewilderment, till Walsingham exclaimed, "Are you hurt?"

"No,—no," she answered, "What is it?"

"The lightning has struck the church; but we are probably safe now."

They were still nearly stifled by the dust; but they could see imperfectly; for they were no longer in total darkness. He looked up and saw a blaze high in the spire; Maria too perceived it; but she became at once calm and steady, and said,—"What are we to do? In the darkness outside we could not find our way; and if we remain we may be destroyed by the flames and ruins."

They looked again, and saw that the flames

had spread wides among the old wood-work, though the rain hissed on them loudly. Walsingham gazed for a minute fixedly upward, and then said,—"We are in no danger. You must continue here in this recess, where nothing falling from above can hurt you; and there are, I think, means of obtaining help. See here!" and he pointed to the rope of the church-bell still hanging near them. This he seized, and began to ring it with all his strength. The loud alarm boomed out through the storm, while the crackling flames blazed and smoked around the spire, but had not yet reached the bell-rope.

He paused after a time, and said,—"I wonder how it happens that this bell is left here, when the building is so entirely abandoned."

"I think I have heard," replied Maria, "that the parish to which the church belongs, but which has a more modern place of worship nearer the village, holds some lands on condition of having this bell rung for an hour every St. Peter's day, and that it is never sounded at any other time of the year."

He now began to ring again, till at last the rope caught fire and was divided; and soon after the bell became heated, and cracked. "So much," he said, "for the parish tenure of its lands." He now placed himself beside her; and in a few moments they heard a human voice and tread, through the abating storm and the increasing

sound of the fire; and then a man carrying a lantern appeared amid the smoky gloom.

Chapter XXIV.

"WHAT fiend," cried the voice, "are you, that have taken possession of the old tower? A pretty beacon and clamour you have raised!"

"We were driven here," replied Walsingham, "by the storm; and the lightning has struck the building. There is a lady here who wants your help."

The man came on, guided by the voice, and, when close to them, held up his lantern to see their faces, thus partly showing his own. "O! Mr. Collins," said Maria, "this is a strange scene that you find us in."

It was the friend she had spoken of to Walsingham, who now stood before them, his hat dripping with rain, which fell over his long and loose grey hair.

"What!"—he answered,—"Maria Lascelles! Why you are even a gayer creature of the elements, than any complimentary young gentleman could have supposed, if you have chosen such an evening for a pleasant ride. And who is this with you?"

"Mr. Walsingham, whose name you must often have heard."

Collins looked at him with a sharp glance of cold curiosity, and said,—"Well, you are as odd a pair of wild-ducks as ever took wing through a storm. But what must be done now?" He looked up at the burning spire, and said, "We shall have half that wood-work and stuff up there down about our heads in three minutes; but the rain must be near over now; it was clearing off fast when I came in. Unless you want to be found by half the village, whom that clatter you were making with the bell will set swarming, to say nothing of the bonfire, you had best be off with me to my house. I can manage to shelter you for the night; and I suppose you can provide for yourselves in the morning." They thanked him for his offer; and Maria said she would not accept it, but that she really felt weak and ill, and feared she should not be able to ride home. They placed her on her horse, which Collins led, carrying the lantern; and Walsingham beside her led his, ready to support her if she required it.

The house to which Collins took his guests, was about half a mile from the church; and he led them by steep paths and over ground soaked with the heavy rain. But the sky was now fast opening, and the moon shone bright. Maria looked silently at the sea; but no ship was to be seen upon its broken, shifting surface. Before they

reached the place of their destination, they passed a cottage, where they procured a man to go on Walsingham's horse and tell Mrs. Nugent of her niece's safety. Turning away from this spot, they had the church in view. The spire, a mass of red and yellow flame, sent up a column of black smoke into the clear sky; and the moon-beams now fell upon that dark aerial structure. While they gazed, the building fell with an audible crash. An explosion of flame, sparks, and smoke flew upwards; and then the conflagration gradually sank down, and was hardly perceptible, except from a dull discoloration above it in the sky, and from the light through a small window in the lower part of the tower.

In a few minutes more they arrived at the house of Collins, which, before he came to it, had been that of a mere labourer. It consisted of three rooms, two below and one above. The upper one was usually his bedroom, the outer of the lower ones his parlour and kitchen, and the other the chamber of the old woman who was his only servant. Walsingham secured the horse in a shed, while Collins showed Maria into his cottage. He drew a seat for her beside the fire-place, and busied himself in kindling a fire, while he sent the old woman up stairs to prepare his room for her use. Walsingham soon came in; and the three sat round the fire.

Collins was hardly of middle age, and of rather

low stature. That which struck you at first as most remarkable in his appearance, was the bright glow of his complexion, and the silver grey of his long, floating hair. He had rather small, dark eyes, which did not fix with keenness, but seemed most frequently averted in abstraction. There was however an air of quietness and resolution about all his actions. His head always looked firmly set, his hands tense, as if to gripe or clench. His feet seemed rooted where he set them down. Ill health, or grief, or natural character, had added a strong cast of sadness, and even of harshness to his countenance; and there was something so earnest and vigorous about the whole aspect, as to give the notion of a catapult kept ever loaded to discharge its weighty missile. This often came in the shape of some rude and sudden phrase, violent and picturesque, but also luminous as a burning arrow. Kindliness and honesty were apparent at first sight, and gained increased value on better knowledge. He had lived in educated society, had travelled, and read much. Two or three years before the present time, he had come to the spot where he now lived, hired a cottage with a tolerable garden, and there established a great number of bee-hives, the inhabitants of which drew their fragrant honey chiefly from the heathy surface of the neighbouring hills. He attended to them himself, and appeared to derive his principal, if not his only

support from them. Many of his hours he spent in wandering alone over the hills. But it was a pleasure to him to meet with any casual strangers, however squalid their wretchedness. He also spoke without reluctance to persons of the highest class of society, who happened to fall within his reach. But, if he found them barren and worthless, he swung them off impatiently, often with some grim jest, and, shaking his bent brows, went on his way sullen and thoughtful.

On the present occasion the wolf-man, as he might himself have said, had on his sheep's clothing, and seemed cheerful and hospitable. He desired his ancient helpmate to prepare tea, and fry some slices of bacon; and with this, and bread, and honey from the hives, they had a meal which sufficed to refresh them.

"What can have taken you," said Collins, "to the old church at such an hour of such an evening? Did you wait till it was pitch-dark, to see the view the better?"

"Darkness," answered Walsingham, "is sometimes well worth seeing. We however wanted only to view the sunset from the church, and proposed to return by twilight and moonlight. But the storm overtook us, and, no doubt, also detained Mrs. Nugent at the farm-house, where she stopped behind for a few moments. We were of course glad of the shelter afforded by the ruin.

What we should have done at last but for you, I cannot imagine."

"Oh! the darkness would not have ate you; and a night in the old church in such weather would have been a foretaste of a kind of dim and bleak ghostland, much like, I suppose, to that which we shall all one day visit. As it is, no doubt, the ringing of the bell will be attributed to an evil spirit by half the county. I myself was rather in hopes of finding some huge skeleton or demon, hard at work pulling the rope, and was rather disappointed at only seeing you."

"Ay," said Walsingham, "it would make no bad tale. Suppose we spread the rumour:—A nameless fiend amused himself with ringing the bell till his burning hands set the rope on fire, which communicated with the wood-work; and, when Mr. Collins and a crowd of country people came to see what was the matter, he burst out at the top of the spire in an eruption of flame and smoke, gave a laughing yell as he vanished; and, at the same moment, the building fell in, and all the inhabitants of the old church-yard were heard to groan in their graves, while Miss Lascelles was obliged by the smell of sulphur to use her smelling-bottle. But after all, Mr. Collins, I doubt whether any apparition you might have found and invited home with you, would have enjoyed your supper as much as we."

"No; I suppose not. And in fact my surprise and disappointment were as foolish as that of a farmer some miles from this, who received an anonymous letter, telling him that in the middle of a certain wood, on such a day, he would find something far more strange and precious than the crown jewels,—a specimen of the most wonderful thing on earth. He went, expecting a bushel of diamonds, or Fortunatus's purse, or something equally unlike turnips and clover, and was much astonished and puzzled at seeing a poor little chubby baby. Yet the letter-writer said true enough. I do not know that even I have much right to complain on the present occasion."

"Then I am sure we have not," said Maria; "but I am afraid you are very wet;"—and she glanced at his hat, which lay on the floor beside him.

"Oh! my old hat is soaked a little. So many queer mists and vapours must rise up in it from one's brains, especially when one has happened to look into a newspaper, or a fashionable novel, that it need not flinch from a few aerial clouds descending on it. It is a sort of temporary firmament, between the storms and clatter of one's head below, and the other capricious meteorology up above. And so Metaphysics are only the Moore's Almanac of our brain-weather. Many a system in the Almanac of a past year is falsified by the event, and reprinted with a fresh date,

as if it would be valid for the next twelve-month."

He laughed a short sardonic laugh, and then fixed his eyes upon the fire, as if he had uttered his oracle and was content.

Walsingham smiled, and said,—"It would be amusing to have a complete history of coverings for the head written on that principle. Their picturesque varieties and diverse uses have often been noticed by travellers, artists, and so forth. But the relation of the head-garment to the thoughts would give a new point of view."

"Well," said Collins, with a tone between defiance and jesting, "there are many odd facts to be noted on that matter. As the land-shells of Madeira are altogether different from those of the neighbouring island of Porto Santo, so the Portuguese population of the one place wear a small funnel-shaped, or unicorn cap; and the same race in the other adorn themselves with a flat bonnét."

"Ah!" said Walsingham, with bland seriousness; "remarks of that depth and originality recall the famous Pythian verses of Nathaniel Lee, the Trophonian prophet:—

> Methinks I see a hieroglyphic bat
> Skim o'er the zenith in a slip-shod hat."

Both Collins and Maria now laughed loud and merrily; and the Recluse said, "Well, no one

can deny that the whole of man is included between his hat and shoes. In these mysterious integuments are concealed the extreme boundaries of his Being, which, though certainly finite, philosophers aver to be all but infinite."

"Or," said Walsingham, "as we may express it in Orphic song:—

> Oh! wondrous powers, ye shoes and hat,
> That bound our human span,
> How idly sages puzzle at
> The limits set to man!"

Thus does the conversation of poets and moralists, when they have not the fear of a pompous public before them, often become mere doggrel and absurdity, and yet suit for the time both the men and the occasion. Such talk helped on the hour till Maria bade them good-night, and, thanking them both, and especially Collins, for his kindness, left them to themselves. She retired to think, to remember Arthur, to shudder at the image of the lost vessel, to pray, and then to sleep. In the mean time Collins made more tea for himself, Walsingham having had enough, and drank it by bowlsful, without milk, and sweetened with his own honey.

Chapter XXV.

"THAT," said Walsingham to Collins, "was a striking event, we have been witnesses of at the church. But I should like to have observed, unseen, the demeanour of the people when they reached the burning edifice, as I suppose a crowd of them soon did. There is much to attract and awaken one in the thought of a living world startled by the conflagration of a neighbouring world of graves and ghosts. But it ought to be painted on both sides. I mean, both from the point of view of the actual beings regarding this convulsion in the realm of the past, and from that of the ruin and its graves impersonated and spiritualized, and brought face to face with bodily mortals. One might round the whole into a little Grecian tragedy, the action consisting of the efforts of the men to save the buildings, and their lamentations over memorials of their ancestors; and the Chorus being a band of spectres, with the grey old founder of the church, clothed in his pall of lead and years, leading the grisly troop, and wailing and admonishing through the tempestuous and fiery air."

"Why," answered Collins, "do anything of the kind? It might be worth while to know what really happened. But what we should gain by taking the mere name of the real event, and

appending a fiction to it, I do not see. When I am not in a very ferocious humour, I do not mind seeing a soldier; for I know what he and his dress are, and mean. But some lord or linen-draper coxcomb in the masquerade dress of a soldier is a thing to be drifted, as soon as possible, down the great sewer of perdition. The uniform on such shoulders is a red rag thrown into the kennel; and the biped is but the fleshly effigy of a man, a good deal more offensive than a wax one at a puppet-show. Now so I hold it to be with your supposed poem. By all means give us as much truth as possible, even though the dose is ever so bitter. But lies, whether in verse or prose, are an abomination under the sun, and above it too, if such pests are known there, which, for the sake of the super-solars, I hope is not the case. Truth, man! truth is the only true poetry, if the business of poetry is to move the feelings, which, for aught I see, might as well be left unmoved. But bread and meat, which we do want daily, are facts. Ambrosia is doubtless a fact too,—for the gods. But for me, a man, it is a fiction. Bread and truth are all man wants; and a loaf is only an eatable lump of truth fitted for the body, as truth is the invisible, but no less substantial, bread of the spirit. Tea too is truth in its way, and very good for a thirsty throat. Talk to me of nectar by the hour; but my mouth would still be dry; and I should wish

you drinking it at Olympus, or anywhere away from me."

"*What is truth?* said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for an answer. But I stand in his shoes, and wait instead of him."

"Truth is every thing that is. Every thing is truth; and every nothing is lie. Destiny for ever spins things,—realities. But man is the only beast I know of that spins nothings,—fictions,—poems. So he tries to swindle destiny and his own fellow-beasts. But destiny spins on unswindled, and leaves him to die like a starved spider in his own cobweb. Honesty is the only true religion: all else is mere superstition, more or less poetic,—that is, more or less false."

"A compendious creed, and that sounds as if it would have saved Aristotle, Quintilian, Strada, and the Schlegels, a good deal of trouble. But look closer. All that I too want is Truth, but Truth made intelligible and effectual for man. In order to this, what is essential and characteristic in an image or feeling must be separated from what is accidental or futile,—I mean, from what must seem so to us,—for, doubtless, nothing really is so,—must be divided from the endless, unmanageable All, which would only bewilder us. That is, it must be marked out as a distinct Whole by itself, with its own beginning, progress, and conclusion. Now, if this be rightly done, we shall have the essential Thought filling its own circle,

excluding all that is extraneous to itself, and taking in and embodying from without whatever is necessary to its own completeness and evidence. All this however is quite as true of a history, or a theory, or a speech, as of a poem. But herein is the difference, that the poem is not meant to convey knowledge, or produce conviction, but to excite a state of feeling at once lively and harmonious. That the feelings may be lively, the poem must have energy, distinctness, glow; that they may be harmonious, it must have consistency and completeness, and must lead to the apprehension of a peaceful order supreme over all confusion. But it may have all these requisites, and therefore be a good poem, and yet be far from a literal representation of the fact, event, thought, or emblem, which supplies the pretext for it. If you rightly weigh all these conditions of a poem's existence, you will see, I think, that it may and often must admit free and marvellous displays of fancy, legend, superstition, and symbolic necromancy. In a word, it must boldly say,—To produce an impression equivalent to that which this actual, but superabundant, overwhelming world would produce in a mind capable of embracing it as a whole, I will shape a world of my own, no less vivid and coherent, but rounded in a smaller circle, readily intelligible to man, and delightful to him, as free from the baffling immensity of that in which he lives.

Everything therefore, which we borrow from the actual for the uses of poetry, must be translated, not transferred, its form and colouring modified, to those required by the unity of the imaginary creation. Such seem to me the laws required by the slightest song, and yet adequate to explain the Odyssey, Hamlet, and Herman and Dorothea."

"Well, a very pretty scheme. But in my notion a mere jugglery. The moment you separate a part of human existence from the great All it belongs to, and seek to shape it into a minor, dependent, and analogous, but distinct world, which, as I understand, is your notion, that moment you lose all law and measure of truth and falsehood. A feeling, an image, an event is true, that is, real, genuine, not when detached, but only when connected with its original circumstances and atmosphere. Suppose, while the clay of nature is yet soft and plastic, I break off a finger or an ear from the great image; this is, no doubt, a real part of the whole. But then the fractional edge recalls that it is only a portion, and ought to be replaced in its former position. But if I again knead it up and round it off into a separate work, betraying no violent dislocation, it ceases to be anything but a fiction of my hands. I cannot make it a small total, recalling and representing the great one in minuter lines, because the great one is too vast, and I see it only in part.

An Iliad was very well; because those for whom it was written believed it all true, read it as history, and had no more doubt of Jupiter and Pallas than of Achilles and Agamemnon. To us, who have looked at the wrong side of the puppet-show, it has lost half its value. But remember besides, that the free extemporaneous Homeric rhythm is very unlike our modern metres. To me it seems that the very fact of writing in artificial, elaborate verse is a proclamation of a design to be absurd."

"Verse ought to be, and to have the evidence of being, the spontaneous and only suitable utterance of lively and delightful emotion. If not, doubtless it is bad, and a trick."

"Almost all I know of is so. As for the verse of Homer and Shakspere, it is only prose fused and fluid. But almost all else is prose pinched, twisted, filed, scraped, and notched into arbitrary forms, in hopes, not of producing any independent feeling, but of awakening some echo of the feeling which the authentic melody of words begets. But, explain it how you will, all fiction in verse or prose is to me abhorrent. I hate straw-men, snow-men, rag-men, colossal dolls, bronze kings and dukes, and all the sons of scarecrows. I loathe your modern romance, which sets up its tawdry wooden Highlanders and calumetted Indians at the door, with as keen an eye to gain and to the public's gross cravings, as the keeper of a

snuff-shop. We have not too much thought and energy among us for actual life; and it is idiotic to waste what we have in aimless sympathies, and to spend our days in tracing out the baby-house labyrinths of songs and sonnets. What would you think of a man, who, when his ship was sinking, and the only chance lay in working with every sinew, should begin to fiddle on the deck, and set the sailors off in an insane dance? We, and the world too, are in just this need; and the poets help us as little."

Walsingham answered calmly,—"I do not remember that the seamen in the Greek story were much the better for throwing Arion overboard."

"Ah! I suppose in that tale some poet was pleading his own cause, and that of his brethren. In this matter however we shall not agree; but I do hold most firmly to the belief that the task of life is a hard, stern work,—to climb with bleeding feet amid rocks of ice and lava. We must have done once for all with cobwebs and rose-vapours, election ribbons and rockets, flummery and finery of all kinds. Sentimental sighing has no business in a world where there are so many heart-broken groans. The will is the foundation of a man. He should stand up,—speak out,—hold fast,—stamp his thoughts in strong words,—and leave lies, songs, flatteries, fancies, and all other mental sillabub to womanish and sickly stomachs. Then when he stands, as I often do, alone upon the

bare hill-top, and thinks of the laws, maxims, amiabilities, decencies, and reputations, which make up what we call our country, and which are but one great fermenting mass of falsehood, let him rejoice that he dares keep his own soul pure and in arms, and breathe the air of heaven, which has not yet been all filled with the reek of men's vanity and voluptuousness. For in our smooth, delicate, moral days, even conscience has been made nothing more than a kind of voluptuous self-indulgence. O! for some rude old John Baptist or Wickliffe, to go through the land, and cry, Wo! Wo! and make our feeble busy men of talents and notoriety, and European reputation,—Heaven help them!—skip at his voice like grasshoppers from before the tramp of a rhinoceros."

"Why should not he, who so strongly conceives, also perform?"

"O! a man may fancy that his arms are long enough to reach the stars; but, when, in trying to raise them above his own head, they have been heavily beaten back and crushed by the demon of the air, he must be content, for a while at least, to rest and nurse his pangs. But you, you for whose pipings and madrigals the world has smooth and favourable ears, you, had you the heart of a man, instead of the fancy of a conjuror, might find or make the sad hour for speaking severe truths. You might inspirit and shame men into

the work of painfully building up new and graver and serener hopes, instead of lulling them into a drunken dream with wanton airs and music."

Walsingham shook his head, but not angrily, and said, "One builds Cyclopean walls; another fashions marble carvings. Each must work as he can. But remember that the Cyclopean walls, though they stood indeed, and stand, became useless monuments of a dead past; and the fox and the robber kennel among the stones. The marble carvings, which humanized their own early age, are still the delight of all humane generations."

"Ay, but those marble carvings, for those who wrought and revered them, were holy realities. Our modern poems and other tinsel-work are for us as mere toys, as musical snuff-boxes or gauze flowers."

"To him who regards them as mere toys, they are indeed worthless, nay, dangerous. That which he handles as a squib, he may find burst between his fingers as a bomb. But of such men, and those who work for them, there need be no discourse between us."

"Of such men I fear there must be discourse between us, if we are to discourse at all, and in speaking not forget ourselves."

Chapter XXVI.

THEY bade each other good night and lay back in their chairs at opposite sides of the fire. Collins went to sleep. But Walsingham sat revolving the conversation that had passed, and his present position. He thought that he distinctly saw the fallacy of his host's views as to poetry, and judged from this evening's experience that he was not a very acute reasoner, so far at least as reasoning is carried on by analysis. He also regarded him as narrow and partial in all his feelings and aims, viewing many things with undue violence, and turning from others with undeserved indifference. The mind, he said to himself, of this recluse resembles a smith's forge, with its small glowing light, its deep imaginative shadows, the strenuous image of the workman, and the weighty and colossal processes to which the whole is devoted. "Well!" he thought, "let others forge crowbars and ploughshares, nay, even weapons and armour: enough for me, in my sunny chamber, with vine-leaves round the windows, to mould graceful figures, or even to engrave the small and unobtrusive gem." His mind however did not rest here. He could not escape from the feeling that, after all, there was in Collins an earnest though rugged and painful force of some kind,

whether of will or feeling or imagination, which bore down the poet. This energy but half understood itself, and was unaccompanied by any sense of the graceful, the harmonious, the complete, without which to Walsingham life appeared bare and empty. It was a character which, in its dim but broken strength, and large though interrupted outline, seemed more imposing to him than any other he had known, than all that he could find in himself. His curiosity and his sympathy with the mysterious were awakened, and were excited the more by his ignorance of the previous history, which, in spite of fervid longings after a high course of human action, had thrown Collins into this solitude, a brooding aimless hermit.

Now, as was his custom, he began to collect and arrange all he knew of the man, and the recent circumstances that had brought them acquainted. But here his thoughts were turned into a different direction; for with the events of the evening the image of Maria recurred to him. He recalled his previous feelings of admiration for her, his delight in her pure, unselfish elevation of heart, his own intellectual superiority, which had enabled him to see over and round her opinions, and the coldness and weakness of his faith in invisible realities, compared with her devout, practical reliance. The unspeakable loveliness of her whole being

presented itself anew to him; and he reflected with how much pleasure he had been able to give her fresh knowledge, and to set her mind in movement in new directions. For, while his suggestions and ideals rooted themselves in her, and re-appeared in gentler and more attractive forms in her demeanour and language, she had seemed to him a nymph-like Grecian girl, catching new hints of melody and themes of verse from a sage master, and by her voice and instrument, her sunny beauty and lyrical glances lending them roundness, fluency, and a thrilling sweetness. Lastly he reviewed the singular hour that he had spent with her in the ruined church, and was conscious of a mingled rush of pain and joy, while for a moment he revived the free and mounting flight of heart with which they had seemed to live together in the tempest, and to rise upon its wings above the ordinary restraints of custom and reserve. It was a less selfish train of emotion, more elevating and enthusiastic, than he had almost ever experienced. But along with this remembrance came the discovery of her secret affection, though for whom he could not divine. From this he would fain have withdrawn his attention; for he habitually endeavoured to turn away from all painful considerations. But the facts were too recent; and she was still too near him. A few feet and a thin ceiling were all that divided him

from the sleeping girl. Love with his torch lighted the poet's imagination up the dark stair. He seemed to see the beautiful and animated head now reclined in still unconsciousness on the pillow, the delicate and benign hand and rounded arm escaping from the folds designed to hide them, the smooth eyelids, with their dark lashes closed, and the full, half-parted lips. Over all the enchanted picture of his fancy, he viewed the silent dream-world opened to her spirit, with many images, of which his own was one, blended in the front, and a dark and fiery cloud of destiny, like the smoke of that night's conflagration, opaque to him, though for her transparent, hiding the main and central figure so incomparably dear to Maria.

The hour of twelve came. The clear picture of the lady in her chamber vanished; the long and busy past, with its prominent and struggling forms, broke at once upon him. He had Arthur and Sir Charles, Wilson and Hastings, Musgrave and Walsingham, before his eyes together. The student, the baronet, the farmer, the traveller, the divine, the poet, — each seemed to him perfectly distinct; yet, as to each, he had a train of evident remembrances; and each, he fancied, was himself. So might he have stood in the midst of many large mirrors, each bright and speckless, but each of a differently coloured glass, a blue, a red, a green, a golden, an amethyst,

a white, and seen himself, his own form, face, gesture, and expression of countenance reflected in each of the surfaces, only with the difference of colouring. But again it seemed that the difference overbalanced the identity, and that he beheld so many several figures, passing for the same one man, by wearing a mask, the fac-simile of his face. As the hour glided on, the various forms grew less and less distinct, though his inward recollection of their history was still clear. He now turned his eyes upon the sleeping countenance of Collins, with its bold and harsh lines still full of melancholy and energetic meaning, and with hair so prematurely grey shading the furrowed brow and beating temples. All the impressions of the evening came upon him with redoubled power. In that face he saw a long inscription to which he required the key. Even without its help, he knew of a concentered zeal and torrid vigour, narrow perhaps in its objects and experience, but having a depth and genuineness of life found in few among mankind, and especially rare in accomplished and refined periods and classes. He said to himself,—I understand and can paint a thousand modes of human existence, from the hero and the sage, to the damsel, the child, and the rude barbarian slave. But there is one character that seems to move beyond me wrapped in its own dark electric cloud. This too shall now

lie clear under my gaze, and be wielded by my will.

The ring did not refuse its function; and Walsingham slept in utter oblivion.

Chapter XXVII.

EARLY on the Sunday morning, which succeeded to the night marked by the burning of the old church-spire, Mrs. Nugent sent her carriage for Maria and Walsingham, who accordingly departed from the cottage. Walsingham and Collins separated on terms of civility; and he took leave of Maria with cordial, and for him uncommon courtesy. She had won upon him in previous meetings by her simplicity and earnestness, which came in aid of earlier ties between him and her family; and there were few persons he seemed to have so much pleasure in conversing with. He said, as he shook hands with her, that he hoped to see her again soon. It was still early in the morning; but he had already spent an hour in his garden, to which he now returned. The plot of ground was large for a cottage, and was neatly kept, entirely by his own care. He had a great number of bee-hives in it; and he now busied himself in examining the labours of the insects, and then the several beds of vegetables

and flowers. To a passer by, had any stranger ever travelled on that retired road, he would have presented a singular object: for his face was sufficiently noticeable; and he was dressed, very unlike the peasantry of the neighbourhood, in a complete suit of dark grey, with thick high shoes, and a straw hat. His garden had several apple and pear-trees in it, and two considerable elms. At the extremity furthest from the small road ran a brook, which made many windings through the valley. There were a few scattered, and for the most part distant cottages in sight. The heathy hills rose all round; and the general aspect of the scene was that of lonely quiet. But the hum of the bees, the murmur of the little stream, and the voice of the faint wind among the leaves, unbroken by the clamour of suffering, or of heedless human existence, were sounds to which his thoughts moved for the most part in accordance. His appearance nevertheless bore deep traces of former sorrow and inward convulsion, over the remembrance of which tranquillity seemed to be maintained by the vigilant compulsion of a strong will.

When he had completed his work out of doors, he re-entered his house; and, while the old woman prepared his dinner below, he mounted to the upper room, and seated himself beside the small open window to read his favourite Thucydides. This author, Homer, Plutarch, Shakspere, Luther's Table Talk,

the Scriptures, a few volumes of biography, and as many of science formed the bulk of his library. His work in the garden, his solitary walks among the hills, or sometimes to the sea-shore, a number of little mechanical employments required by his situation, and the perusal of these books filled up his time. It was only by the rarest accident that he received a visit from any one. But a day or two after Maria and Walsingham had shared his hospitality, his usual mode of life was again interrupted by the arrival of a stranger on horseback at the cottage-gate. Sending away the peasant who had conducted him, he tied his horse to a tree, and entered the garden. He was evidently a member of the more luxurious classes, dressed with care, but pale and somewhat worn in countenance. He had the look of a man of some intelligence, of rather dissipated habits, and an acknowledged member of polite society. Collins was digging at the lower part of his garden, near the hives, when he was found by the stranger, who had first sought him at the cottage. There was some embarrassment in his manner, as he drew near to the recluse: but it was not till he had come quite close, that Collins looked up, leaning on his spade, and, while a deep flush passed over his face, said coldly, after a moment's pause, "Well, Everard, what brings you here? I thought my world had lain quite beyond and away from yours."

He did not offer the stranger his hand, who replied, with a hesitating voice, "Will you not be satisfied, for a reason, with my wish to see so old a friend as you?"

Collins smiled sarcastically, but said nothing.

"Well then, if you must have a better cause for my visit, may we not go into the house, that I may tell my story at leisure?"

"I don't see why you should not tell it here; but I have no objection to go into the house. This earth which I am digging, will not spoil by five minutes' delay, as it has kept since the creation."

So saying he led the way to the cottage, sent his servant to her own premises, desired his guest to sit down, and seated himself with an air of resigned unwillingness.

"It is pleasant, Collins," said Everard, "to find you settled in a way that suits your humour and character. You had always a good deal of the hermit in you; and now you have found out a quiet and secure hermitage, where I am sure you must be happy."

"Pray, may I ask on what business you are come to it? I don't remember that you ever showed any taste for hermitages before."

"No, perhaps not. Such a life would not suit me; but every one has his own way of existence. Mine at present is politics. But unwilling as you are to let me claim the privilege of an old friend,

—and I am most sincerely yours,—I must say a word of your former kindness to me, and of my subsequent history. Little as you may believe it, I can never cease to be grateful for the generosity with which you shared your fortune between us, at the time when my father's unexpected death left me so destitute. The income you then made over to me, saved me from sinking into disgraceful poverty. But with the connexions I had formed in life, and the hopes I had been brought up in, I could not, you know, live as a gentleman on that. I am going over old ground; for I fancy you are aware that I soon found I must sell my interest in your annuity. With the little capital this gave me, I could make a decent appearance; and I soon after managed to get into Parliament. I think about this time you left London."

"Yes. The merchants who had all my remaining money failed, and left me penniless. I was obliged to go and work for my bread, which I earned as a corrector of the press in the North."

"O! true,—ay,—I remember.—Now, I always felt it was my business to repay you what you had supplied me with as soon as possible. But my position in life was above my means; and I had not a penny to spare. Some little legacies and so forth came in now and then, and helped me on; but I always found it hard to make both ends meet; and the attempt to divert money to

any object but the wants of the day would have been quite inconsistent with my ambition to serve my country in public life. The clubs and parliament cost more than is generally supposed; and my seat had always to be paid for, more or less. So you see, my dear fellow, how it is that I really have never had the means of repaying you; and at this hour I am as poor as a rat. You who live in this sort of way, keep no establishment, and all that sort of thing, can have no notion of the claims upon a man in society in London."

"I once lived in London."

"Yes, no doubt. But that was when we were both young, quite unknown; nothing was expected from us then. But the fact is, it is only now that I begin to have a prospect of obtaining a situation, which would enable me to do whatever is right as to you and everybody; and it is for this I want your help."

"My help, Mr. Everard? I really do not understand you."

"Well now, this is the case. I have always hitherto been member for quite a small borough; and the little place I hold is perhaps all I could fairly expect under existing circumstances. But in consequence of my patriotic principles, and of any other claims I may happen to possess, I have the hope of representing a much more important constituency, which would give me greater weight with the Government, and help me to official

promotion. Now it so happens, my dear Collins, that you can essentially assist me. I find that you lived at one time among my future constituents, when, as you say, you were correcting the press; and you would undoubtedly have a good deal of influence, if you chose to exert it, among the artisans, especially the printers, who lead many of the others. They talk of you as a sure friend of the working men; and your opinion would have great power over them. Indeed so much is this the case, that one of their number is coming as a deputy to consult you on the subject. It so happens that the decision you may lead them to is of great importance: for parties are otherwise so nearly balanced, that the votes of these men would turn the scale in my favour. The kindness I have to ask of you is, that you would advise them to vote for me. I hope so old a friend may make this request without taking too great a liberty."

"I really cannot now say what advice I shall give this poor man. When he comes and tells his story, I shall probably know what to answer. But pray, if the working men help you, what are you prepared to do for them?"

"As to that, you must see, between ourselves, I can say nothing. I must go with my party. But you may tell them, as I have not scrupled to say publicly over and over again, even at the risk of committing myself, my warmest feelings and

most earnest endeavours shall be devoted to their service."

"I did not ask what I may say. Of course I may tell what lies I please, and should wish to do so without prompting, as I hold that every man ought to be his own liar. But I want to know, as you ask the help of these men, what service you propose to render them in return. Printers know too well how easily, and with how few little metal letters, the finest words are put together, to care much for mere compliments."

"But surely a man of your experience and sagacity, Collins, cannot expect me to commit my party to any specific measure?"

"Then how can you expect these men to commit themselves in supporting you?"

"That's quite a different thing. They compromise nobody. They are not public men. They may do as they please."

"They compromise themselves, and their wives and children, and their own consciences, and all to get my dear old friend, Everard, a better place."

The tone with which this was said, though quiet enough, carried the edge of a scalping-knife. But Everard, who had a soul very hard to be scalped, soon resumed: "Well, I will tell you what I will pledge myself to; and you, who have known me so long, may guarantee my promise. If these men will frame any plan for their

own benefit, it shall have my very best consideration."

"Oh, if they bring you into Parliament, you will think benignly of their suggestion? Perhaps, if I offer your friend the deputy your best consideration for his proposals, he may offer his best consideration for yours."

"Ha! ha! ha! You are as droll and dry as ever. But may I hope that you will help me in this matter? You may rely on my eternal gratitude, and, I may add, on that also of my political friends."

"I can say nothing on the subject, till I see the person who, you say, will ask my advice. I shall give him the best in my power. You have not asked for any; and in your case I do not presume to volunteer it."

"But, my dear friend! surely between us there need be no such ceremoniousness. Your advice would be of the highest value, and would always meet my very best consideration."

"Will you really promise me that? For, if so, I should think it a duty to offer an opinion."

"Pray do so without hesitation. I am all impatience. What is it you recommend to me?"

"To turn old clothesman as soon as possible. I do not know any trade you are so fit for; and I am convinced you would make a distinguished figure in it, especially if you gave it your best consideration. Now I must go back to my work;

for I too am a working man;—so good morning to you."

Chapter XXVIII.

ON the following day Andrews, the artisan from the North, appeared at the cottage. He was a young, quiet, alert man, with a shrewd and bold countenance. As he drew near to the bench on which Collins sat in the garden, his face and manner had an expression of much respect. He stated who he was; and Collins begged he would sit down by him on the bench under the old elm, from which there was an extensive view down the valley to the sea, now glistening under the warm evening light. Andrews told his story clearly and earnestly, though at rather unnecessary length, and ended by asking Collins's opinion, whether he and his friends ought to support Everard.

"What political object is it," said Collins, "that you and your friends want to gain."

"We want to take away all unjust distinctions, to have every man paid according to the worth of his labour, and not to see the rich made and kept rich by robbery, and the poor made and kept poor by being robbed."

"Do you want a new distribution of all property? For, if so, I see no result certain, but, in the first place, that the country will be

thrown into confusion, all trade stopped, and millions starved; and, secondly, that the distributors would provide very well for themselves and their friends, whatever might become of others."

"No, we do not want that. But we want all the privileges of the rich done away, so that every man may have a fair chance."

"There is no privilege of theirs half so important, as that which gives a man's property to his own children, instead of throwing it into a common stock. Would you do that away?"

"No. I would only deprive a man's family of property which he had obtained unjustly."

"In that case the courts of law are meant to set the thing right. They do not perform their work very well, to be sure. Perhaps you want them mended. But, if they were improved, do you think many of you could make out a claim to houses and estates."

"Perhaps not. But could not taxes be taken off?"

"Oh, no doubt there could. A rich country is sure to spend a deal of money foolishly, much as a rich man is. But suppose everything of that kind were done, and that you, each of you, had twenty per cent. a-year more than you have now, do you believe you would be satisfied? Think a little before you answer."

"No; I do not believe we should. We are on

the watch and stirring, and feeling forward for some great change. I do not suppose we should be contented, so long as we saw things going on in the main as they are now, even if we had a little more money. It is the notion of being treated unjustly and kept down, that galls us. We want more equality. We see that we work hard, and have little pleasure, while others do not work at all, and have a great deal. I cannot make the thing clear. But I am sure there is something wrong somewhere."

"So am I. I never can believe it right that a farthing of money should be wasted in folly and nonsense, with which any real good could be done. But how could you change the thing? That is the question. If we took half the property of the rich away to-morrow, and gave it to the poor, then,—to say nothing of the general confusion, the scrambling and fighting, and the lasting insecurity for all,—half of that sum would be spent within a week; and the country, I believe in my conscience, would be worse off in every way than it is now."

"Why, you are talking just like the people we consider our worst enemies. Yet I suppose you are not pleased with things as they are; and I should like to know what you want done?"

"Men never have been satisfied, and never will be. But one goes on trying to mend a little here and a little there, till the hour of ruin comes, and

the building falls, and buries mason and scaffolding at once. Such is the story of the world. There is a black element of evil in and about us all; and the utmost we can do is to thrust it down, and cover it over for a while. It inevitably breaks out at last, and perhaps most violently there, where it has been most vigorously and longest suppressed. We may smooth over the mischief, paint it, gild it, bedizen it for a time: but it burns through again at last, and looks the ghastlier for all our attempts at hiding it. Talk, fancy, hug ourselves as we will, evil is not good, nor can be. He who sees most clearly is most assured of this, and suffers the most from his knowledge that it is so. Any man therefore, who looks forward to a state of things in which he shall be contented, is walking about in search of a child's swaddling-clothes, that will fit his full-grown frame. The fact of his walking about is the best evidence that the thing is impossible. To seek contentment in fact is as hopeless, as to try to recover a lost limb. Those only have it, who never have thought about it. The moment we feel that we wish for it, we may be certain that it is gone for ever. Do not talk to me of aiming at happiness. Children too desire the stars. Leave such prate to those who have no serious knowledge or objects. Men who have grappled with the realities of life, should be wiser and graver."

Andrews felt cowed by his energy, and said timidly,—"Do not all men seek happiness? Is it possible for us to desire anything else?"

"That is one of the absurd phrases we find in books. No man could have said it, who had looked into himself. All men sometimes seek for happiness, as they sometimes crave for food, that is, when they are hungry. But most of our wishes are directed to some end with which happiness has no more to do than quenching the thirst has to do with the drunkard's lust of gin. What he thirsts for is liquid drunkenness. Excitement is the object of three-fourths of most men's wishes, and repose of the other fourth; excitement, though it should rend our flesh, and fill our brains with fire; repose, though it should weigh on us, and besiege us with nightmare. And so the world goes on by laws, which unfailingly work out good and evil in their due and unalterable proportion."

"What then do we strive for at all?"

"Oh, the evil is only kept down from mastering all, and trampling out the last spark of good, by human effort,—unceasing, wearing, agonizing effort, which after all realizes little, though it prevents much, and inevitably destroys the drudging champions. We thrust our limbs, our wives, our children, into the midst of the grinding machinery of destiny, which is crushing the universe to powder; and so we a little clog and retard the

movement by the hindrance of our own flesh and blood. This may seem a small thing to do. But it is all that man can do, and that for us is much."

"If this is all we must look to, I doubt if it be worth while to care for anything but eating and drinking."

"What! not worth while to bind oppressors in their own chains, and with their own names fill up the blank warrants, which they keep signed, as if forejudging all mankind! not worth while to be ministers, even if bleeding and groaning ones, of retribution! to become serpents under the feet that would trample us as worms! to call out energies and knowledge, painful inmates of every breast, but which are accompanied by the feeling of added dignity and power! We cannot strive successfully with fate, or teach others to do so; but we can tear off our and their bandages, and unbind millions of arms, and prevent men from perishing fettered and with closed eyes. We can meet our inevitable doom with the aspect at least of freedom and heroism. Is not this worth while? If so, it can only be, because life itself is nothing. But to beings such as we, nothings are mighty. Knowledge, imagination, freedom, courage, power,—these may be awakened and spread among mankind; and to do this is the only task worth living for. These cannot be diffused equally; for men are not equally capable

of them. Sparrows will still be sparrows, and hawks, hawks. But the sparrows need no more be caged and blinded, than the hawks hooded and starved. It is little that the best can at last attain to: but the only feeling worth possessing is that of having done our utmost, and confronted the iron gaze of necessity with as bold and calm an eye as can belong to man."

"But for the present what should our course be?"

"Meddle with no political parties. Their maxims and enterprises are all utterly worthless. Those who flatter you do it only to cheat you; except those who begin by cheating themselves, and fancy that somehow or other they will at each next trial throw seven with a die, which has but six faces. Mankind have been hoping the same thing for at least four thousand years. But when you find a quiet man,—who tells you of your faults, not of your virtues, and makes no promises of doing good, but has already fought with resolute despair against powerful evil, cling to him, help him, redden his flag with your heart's blood, if it be necessary: for, if he renders you no other service, he has at least given you the costliest of boons, truth, which his future failures cannot deprive you of. But when you see bullies, sycophants, flatterers, liars, spaniels, apes, peacocks, jewel-snouted swine, — men who gorge themselves with garbage, and bribe you with the

remains of it,—do not ask what party they are of. Be sure that they are of the devil's family, and so certain of his help as to stand in little need of yours. Then as to this Mr. Everard. Let him eat his mess as he can out of a gilded, perhaps one day a coroneted trough: but do you neither wreathe the vessel with flowers, nor throw in your children's food to swell the swinish meal. I will tell you something of him. He is well-spoken, civil, lively, or at least was so, before he became a great man. There was then a thin plating of sympathy on the surface of the mass of lead and copper, which the world, I suppose, has by this time worn away. A man whom I know knew him in the youth of both, and became intimate with him. Everard's father possessed a large income, and brought up his son expensively, but died and left him without a farthing. His friend had about £400 a year of his own, and, with the careless profusion of his age, at once settled half of this on Everard, who sold the annuity, and began to push his fortune with the capital thus obtained. Soon afterwards his benefactor was ruined by the failure of a commercial house, and left penniless. Everard was certainly not bound to refund the money, which indeed he could not: but his friend might have expected kindness and consolation from him, and met instead with coldness and neglect, and at last was compelled to turn his back, and vow he never

again would soil his foot in that dirtiest of kennels. Now I do not say that such a man may not be useful to a political party: on the contrary I think him likely to be specially serviceable for many purposes; and I am sure he will rise, as there is no service for which he will not exact full payment. He will coin his inmost heart to mud, where mud is the required currency. But what can those who think of man, not of parties, of truth, not of speeches, in short, of hard rude realities, not of fluent liquid dirt, what can such persons have to do with a thing like him? Oh, my friend, whatever else you are, lord or bishop, artist or slave, do not give up being a man. Do not let your manhood slip through your fingers, while you are plotting, voting, speech-making, working. A stage-hero, who pretends to be what he is not, is but like the snuff of a candle, compared with the stage candle-snuffer, who wears no tinsel armour, and mouths no blank verse, but honestly earns the bread he eats by making the tallow-candles burn. A mere scheming statesman is a white paper full of mire, tied up with a red tape, and sealed with the king's seal. And so with all other trades and pretensions. Have nothing to do with them. Stand up openly for truth, and all true men; and let this, and this only, be your creed and your party. Though you will often be trampled on, and will be ground at last, as we must all be, to that dust which the

strong wind of Time blows away before it, you will not be the dupe of others, and, best of all, you will not dupe yourself."

"But is there no party which honestly seeks what is right?"

"I do not know. But I shall believe there is,—I shall believe there is some conscience and heart under all the trash and parade of laws and government, when I see any body of men, not slightly and occasionally, but with their whole souls and sinews, standing up for the necessity of educating the people. If any one of these men found a son who had been stolen away in infancy, and had grown up among beggars and thieves, knowing and caring for nothing but gluttony and drunkenness, the first thing he would do would be to put him in the hands of some one who would cultivate the man, which lurks, however closely, within the human breast, and so, in the phrase of society, to fit him for his station in the world. That is what I want,—to have every man fitted as well as art, and pains, and money, and energy, can do it, for his station in the world."

"But what is the station?"

"It is that of a being at the top of nature, and looking up thence, however dimly, to some God, who embodies, though perhaps vaguely and weakly, all of highest conception man can know. This is the station, not of Reginald and Marmaduke,

not of Jack and Tom, not of the prince and the baron, or the ploughman, the blacksmith, and the parish foundling, but of every human creature; and for this station he ought to be trained. To train him for this is in truth the only business, not merely the chief one, of all laws and all society; and yet it is the one which is the least earnestly thought of. Fleets, armies, tribunals, parliaments, sovereignties, palaces, and gaols, are the rude framework round the space in which this work is to be carried on. But it is not to be done by drilling, and compressing, and carving, and stamping words upon the living, fervent, sensitive,—oh, how keenly sensitive!—spirit, as if it were a plate of metal on a death-coffin, and not the subtle blazing life, likest of all things in this vast universe to the God whom these vile tinkers of the soul profess to worship. There are three things requisite in every man who is to carry on this work,—love, intelligence, energetic will,—and, beside these, practical skill and experience. When I see men possessed of these qualities sought for by a government more earnestly than men seek for diamonds, wooed more fondly than boys woo their sweethearts, rewarded more munificently than rich men pay the physician who prolongs their lives, and keeps them from Satan for another week,—when I see such men found,—for found they will be if they are sought, and

appointed as the friends, and guides, and wiser parents of every poor man's child in the country, —I shall think a new age is begun for England, and that new hopes have dawned upon us. Make earnestness on this point your test of every politician who falls in your way; and you will not go far wrong. It is mere cowardly falsehood, to pretend that doubt of the amount of good thus attainable is a reason against trying; for it is the only way to do any good at all. A man's whole business on earth as to his own existence is to cultivate himself; and his whole business as to others is to cultivate them."

"I fear," said Andrews, with a smile, "Mr. Everard is not our man."

Chapter XXIX.

A DAY had passed after the departure of Andrews, when Collins went on one of his long walking expeditions about the hills, and on his return towards evening, found himself near the Mount, which was the name of the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Nugent. As he passed under the paling of a small wood, which lay at the back of the gardens, Maria was entering a little gate into the enclosure; and, after their first greetings, she asked Collins to accompany her. He complied; and they

walked side by side on the path which wound among the trees. For a long time he looked about with rather an eager and anxious expression; and at last he said, "How strange it seems to me that I am in this place! Your mother used to speak to me of it as furnishing some of the pleasantest recollections of her childhood. And now, after many years, I am walking in it with you, her daughter. When I first thought of fixing myself in some solitude in the country, I believe I was led to choose these heathy hills and retired valleys from the remembrance of the way in which your mother used to describe them. Such seemingly slender links bind the past and the future indissolubly together; and I do not regret that I have come here. If it were only that I keep my image of her fresh, I should be much the gainer. No one can again be to me what she was; for the benefits she rendered me can no more be repeated, than the restoration of a blind man to sight, which is done once and for ever. I was young, ignorant of all but a few books and a few men, and my own passions and conceits, and had no opportunity of familiarizing myself with human existence in any wide field. I well recall the arrogant reliance on my own infallibility, which was mingled in me with the weakest bashfulness, and secret dread of every one knowing more of the world, and having more of its manners, than

I. But I became acquainted with your mother; and I shall never forget the impression made on me by her composed self-possessed benignity. At her house I saw, not perhaps much of society, but far more than I have ever seen elsewhere; and little by little I learned to suppress something of my self-conceit, and at the same time to take an easy footing among others. I found little indeed that I could fully and deeply reverence; and the more I lived, the more strongly I felt that she was a really noble, generous, true spirit, cramped and dimmed in an ungenial sphere. But yet she kept her heart alive, and wakened and warmed the hearts of others, so far as they had any relics or germs susceptible of the process. I remember, as if it were but this morning, that nearly the last time I saw her, and when she was very weak and ill, but with an expression of divine calm and clearness, she questioned me about an acquaintance of her's and mine,—a woman. This was a person of great talents and brilliant eloquence, and a kind of large and glowing Italian beauty, with whom I had become intimate. She had restless feelings, always craving more and more excitement, insatiable vanity, ready and warm sympathy, and an imaginative delight in nature, the fine arts, and all the more graceful and the bolder forms of human character. Her presence and conversation wrought on me like a sweet intoxi-

cating odour,—much as I can conceive the influence of Walsingham might on a woman,—young and susceptible as I then was. Your mother saw through all this, warned me, said, —'That way lies guilt, shame, weakness, remorse, self-contempt. At the very best,' she continued, 'go, live, and grow in that luscious hothouse air; and, although your leaves may spread for a time more richly, and your fruit appear to ripen faster, how will you be fit to meet the storms, the cold, the changes of hardy and austere nature? Draw back in time. Perhaps she does not mean to dupe you; but, if so, yet assuredly with your help she will dupe both herself and you. Your fresh high heart and daring will and pictorial fancy are too new and shining realities not to win and command her. But do not waste yourself in adding another chapter to her overstrained romance of life.' Partly circumstances, but partly, I hope, also this advice saved me from the danger. At the hour when I heard of my adviser's death, I vowed never again to meet my siren, at least till years and events should have altered our relative positions. I kept my vow. It was but one of many services that your mother rendered me, at a time when most of my acquaintances were only staring at me, or shrinking from me. They had no more feeling for me as a living suffering human heart, suffering from its own

confusions more bitterly than any of those whom I annoyed,—no more, I say, than if I had been a thing painted on canvas only to be gazed at. And a very unattractive sign it would have been in the eyes of most people for any tavern in London, though not quite so obnoxious as I should be now where I am known. But, if you consider how I must feel as to your mother, you will not wonder that I have been speaking in this way to you, her daughter, as if I had a right to receive your confidence, or at least to give you mine."

Maria listened with deep interest to this discourse, and only started and coloured a little at the mention of Walsingham, the allusion to whom she could not misunderstand. Indeed she even fancied that Collins's whole object had perhaps been to suggest to her his view of the poet's character, and of the danger to be apprehended from him. But she forgave him the more readily, because she felt herself secure. At the same time, as Collins went on to speak of her mother, her eyes filled slowly with silent tears, one of which, as she turned and looked earnestly at him, fell upon his hand. He too looked at her; and his voice softened and faltered before he made an end of speaking.

Maria said, after some moments,—"I am very much obliged to you for speaking to me as you have done. My—my dear mother, I am sure,

loved you; and it would be a great happiness to me to believe that you give me any portion of the regard which you felt for her."

"You cannot be to me what your mother was. I cannot feel as I did then. If I told you otherwise I should be lying; for compliments are only lies in court-clothes. I would as lief see the patients of a hospital, with all their haggardness, tricked out in gala dresses from Monmouth Street. But if you will look on me as a true friend, believe me, I am one,—and shall be so while I live."

"Thank you!" And she gave him her hand, which he received cordially. "Now," she said, "I will venture to ask you a question, which has very often occurred to me; but I never could venture on it before. You have spoken almost as often as I have seen you with bitter contempt of indolence and self-indulgence. I know how deeply and writhingly you feel the existence of so much misery in the world, and that you believe much may be done to remedy it. What I want you to tell me is this: why, with such views, you spend your life as you now do, with no apparent occupation beyond the skill of a peasant? Often, when I have heard you speak, I have fancied that, if you would only try, you would make others hear, understand, feel, and act."

"I told you that you would find me your sincere friend; and so you shall: for I will tell

you something of my story, which perhaps will diminish your surprise. But to no one have I ever spoken of the matter before; and when you hear it, you will not wonder at my reserve. I have had two male friends in my life, or those whom the world would call so. One of them, the early friend, united to me by youth and circumstances, has turned out altogether worthless. Where I thought I had a diamond dew-drop, I found a stain of the commonest ditch-water. The other was the friend of my commencing manhood, ardent, sympathetic, graceful, expansive, clear of head, and vigorous of heart. He had fortune and appearance in his favour, as well as useful family connexions; and, while I was in the eyes of men an uncouth contentious reprobate, he was regarded with general favour and applause. He took many of his opinions from me; and my influence modified all his pursuits and aims. His taste led him strongly towards literature. He was ambitious of fame, and, as a thinker and creative artist, would perhaps have obtained it. But I felt the extent of wrong and grief on earth harshly and fiercely, and would cheerfully have spent my life-blood, and that of my friend, to redress a portion of the evil. I had been left penniless, and was obliged to work for bread. He offered me half his income, as I had done to another: but that experiment had been too unfortunate; and I would not accept his

bounty. Our friendship however still continued. I urged him into practical political life, for which he had many qualifications, and some outward helps, although but little inclination. There was a large town, which I was anxious that he should represent; and I persuaded him to plunge into the schemes and confusions of its parties. On his first electioneering attempt he failed. But at another I furnished him with proofs of the utter public and private baseness of his chief opponent. These he published, and chased the culprit from the field. But the exasperation of this man's partisans impelled one of them, a gentleman by station, to seek a quarrel with him, and challenge him. I was a hundred miles away at the time, but hastened to the place, and found him a corpse. He had been shot by the pistol of a bullying sycophant, which I felt as if I had loaded and pointed at his heart. The ball pierced mine too; and I was a miserable man. You cannot conceive what I felt then,—at least I trust you cannot;—and it would be useless to describe it. This was three years ago. The shock turned my hair grey, and drove me from among mankind. The time which has passed since has not been more than enough to restore me to a specious outward tranquillity:—inward peace, even of the hollow fretful kind which I before enjoyed, it has not brought me. Nor will a thousand years do that. You do not know,—may you never learn!—the con-

tinual subdued horror of remembering how the whole existence of another, one who relied on you, was overthrown and crushed under a weight first loosened by your hand. I once thought it resembled a perpetual burning alive on the unquenchable funeral pile of another's corpse. The pain however of this mortal ulcer in my heart has grown comparatively dull and chronic; and I am regaining the command of my faculties. How I shall exert them hereafter I know not, but probably by speech and writing for humane and moral purposes, rather than by any interference in what is called politics. I see too many sticking up to their necks in that slough, and calling for help, to believe that it would yield me stable footing. But I have never heard of any attempts at good, undertaken independently of party, in purity of heart, and with quiet consideration of the case and circumstances, which have not more than fulfilled the hopes of the man."

"It comes on me," said Maria, "like a heavy blow, when I hear any one despair of full and tranquil happiness. I am sure it is to be found by those who seek it; and although there is something grandly heroic in the struggle that is carried on under the certainty of never attaining this good, I cannot but believe that the possession of it would add a sober strength to all our efforts, which they must otherwise want."

Collins smiled, half sadly, half scornfully, and

shook his head, "It is Destiny, not I, that will deprive you one day of that faith."

"I do not know what Destiny means; but I trust in God."

"Take what name you will for the ruling Power of all things. God cannot perform impossibilities."

"Yes; but for Him no good is impossible."

"It may be,—nay, I feel it is so,—that for a resonable voluntary being, learning as only he can learn by experience, there will always be errors behind to mourn over, and a vista of unattainable good before, which inevitably lengthens as we advance. It only remains for us to grieve without affectation or imbecility, and to journey on without turning aside or stopping."

"For all the ills you speak of, there is, I am sure, a remedy, if I could but make you understand me. I have learned to call it Faith; but I know that it is Blessedness. Now it would seem of course that you must know better than I; but at least I have the advantage of you for the present in my more hopeful creed and happier mind. By the way, have you ever seen a poor man who lives in this neighbourhood, of the name of Fowler? I have visited him several times; and he seems to me a beautiful example of peace and joy, in circumstances which would naturally produce despair, and might almost seem to justify it. He is a crippled basketmaker, without family or

friends, or settled means of subsistence; and yet, by dint of reliance on a good Power protecting and guiding him, he is full of cheerfulness and hope. I wish you would go and see him, and make acquaintance with him."

"I will. But both for you and him the day will inevitably come of awakening to a higher and larger self-consciousness, and a sadder knowledge of our destination."

"God forbid! And, my dear Mr. Collins, you must not forget that I have been, in former times, when I was about sixteen, as perfectly wretched as I can imagine any one; so that mine is not the mere unreflecting contentment of a child. I was then beginning to think a little for myself; and I found my own heart and life so far from what I saw they ought to be, that I was almost in despair. Had I been a Romanist, I might have been tempted to turn nun."

"What changed your views?"

"I will tell you. I was taken for the first time to a great party in London, and was thoroughly dazzled and confused by all I saw, and by the excitement of the music and dancing round me. I remember that it seemed to me as if everything in the world was successively rolling out of its stedfastness, and wheeling away in tangled curves to the sound of necromantic music. I said to myself, 'Where am *I*? What am *I*? Is everything a dream?'—*In the midst of this*

amazement of mine, a famous singer came forward; silence was obtained; and she sang with such impassioned ravishing melody, that I thought my soul would have flown away upon her aërial warbling. The applause, as she ended, called off my attention; but then I saw a crowd of faces turned towards her in enthusiastic delight, and deep homage expressed in the eyes and manner of some of the men and women, whom I had always heard of as the most to be admired and reverenced. She sat evidently weary, but with a slight smile of exquisite enjoyment; and it burst upon me more strongly even than before, that her inspiration must arise from some full and rich source of ecstacy, far beyond all that skill or physical endowment could supply. 'O!' I thought, 'that I could sing like her! that I could experience her inward spring of rapture and harmony!' The next moment I blamed my own folly, and felt that this was mean and jealous envy. It flashed across me as something horrible, that, after such abundant and pure delight, I could so soon sink into this wretchedness; and a sharp pang of self-reproach shot through me. I remember that I pressed my hand strongly against my heart; for I completely crushed the little nosegay of flowers which I was wearing. The music and the dancing now again began; and, looking up for a moment in sad perplexity, I saw a spectacle which altered

the whole current of my thoughts. It was a picture of the Saviour, by one of the great Italian masters, I think of the Lombard school, and probably Luini. By whomsoever painted, it was so grave, so loving, so awful,—but I cannot describe it. For some minutes I had no notion where I was, and sat with my face turned up towards the canvas, as if I expected to hear it speak. And speak to me indeed it did, though not with audible sounds; for there whispered in my heart words, which I had heard and read a hundred times, and learned by rote, without ever reflecting on them. Perhaps this mechanical familiarity had deadened their meaning. The words were,—*Be of good cheer! I have overcome the world.* I remember nothing more that evening, but that, in the carriage, on my way home with my aunt, my eyes filled with tears, and my maid remarked the next morning that the front of my dress was stained, as if I had been weeping profusely. Thus began a new period of my life, which I do not believe will ever end, not even with earthly life itself."

Collins answered nothing; but, when he said he must take leave of her and go, there was an expression of strong feeling in his face, which could not be mistaken. They had been walking up and down the wood during their whole conversation. It was now the depth of evening. Maria accompanied him to the gate of the en-

closure; and they parted as friends for whom an hour had been in place of years of mutual sympathy.

Chapter XXX.

THE next day Collins went, in pursuance of his promise, to see the poor basketmaker, of whom Maria had spoken, and who was commonly known in the neighbourhood by the name of Jack Fowler. His dwelling was a small hut, rather than cottage, close to the road-side. Before his new visitor reached it, he heard a rough and cracked voice singing vigorously,—

> Merry be we from morn till night,
> Merry be we, merry be we.
> We old fellows, in dark or light,
> But ask the young to let us be.

Then, when Collins was already close at hand, the tune was changed, and he caught the words,—

> The boy he never stops
> In the whipping of his tops;
> And the men whip each his neighbour:
> But in wiser age we lay
> Our idle whips away,
> And sleep like the tops without labour.

The building from which these sounds came, appeared about ten feet square; and through the open door and window was seen the room which filled this space, and which was partly occupied

by a ladder-stair leading to the floor above. Facing the door was a man seated on a bench, weaving a basket. He looked up cheerfully, as Collins stood before him, and said, — "Good morning! good morning! Ah! Mr. Collins come to see poor Jack Fowler! Well, you are kindly welcome. They do say you know more about bees than any man in these parts. Take a seat, sir, here on the bench: here's room enough."

Collins sat down, and looked more closely at him. Jack Fowler probably considered himself past the middle age, being apparently about seventy-five. He also seemed to be in somewhat reduced circumstances; for his principal garment, perhaps in some forgotten period a waggoner's frock, exhibited several holes, some of them repaired by patches, and some still unsophisticated and gaping. His person bore the traces of similar, and probably more ancient injury; for it had been shorn of a leg, and had only received a wooden member as a substitute, resembling the original in little else than length, as to which the modern supporter had the advantage perhaps over the preceding one. The right hand had apparently lost the use of two of its fingers, for which it had found no remedy but in the dexterity of the others. The bust which crowned this antique trunk, was of higher interest; for under the trenched and expansive

forehead appeared a face of arch shrewdness and irresistible good-humour. The fine blue eyes were still bright, the cheek healthily ruddy, and the sunken mouth wore a most gladdening smile. The old man had beside and behind him the osiers which were the materials of his trade, and two or three baskets. The one he was at work on lay before him; and on a three-legged stool, close to his knee, sat, with professorial gravity, a black cat. While he spoke to his visitor, he continued to ply his work, and broke out every now and then with some light-hearted stanza.

"How do you get on?" said Collins.

"Oh, very well, sir, thank you. I make it a rule to get on well. Never got on ill in my life, except when the waggon went over my leg, and before the doctor came to cut it off, and set me all to rights again. I have never wanted a stocking for that leg since; and only think what a saving that is. Ay, ay, Mr. Collins,—all for the best.

> Bald is my head; so it wears no lock
> For age or care to take hold of;
> And my forehead's a door where Grief may knock;
> But as well might he rap on the front of a rock,
> For I am not the man he was told of.

"Basket-making," said Collins, "seems a merry sort of trade, to judge from you."

"Ay, sir, it is a merry trade enough, like most others I know of, for those that have merry

hearts. And mine has never been heavy, since I first found I was not going to have the trouble of being a gentleman, with all the wearisomeness of a fortune to spend. Great blessing that! Don't you think so, sir?"

"Why, it seems to have been so to you. But every man has not your basketful of heartiness; and, if one wants that, I think a purse full of gold no bad help."

"So many think. I fancied so myself for five minutes once; and then, before one could twist an osier, I saw what a big fool I was. Perhaps too you think I had better be young than old. But, if you do, I can tell you it is a thumping mistake; for I should have all the work to do over again. I'd as soon have the waggon go over my leg again, just for fun.

O! for the days when I was young!
When I thought that I should ne'er be old,
When the songs came a-bubbling off my tongue,
And the girl that heard the ballad I sung,
Never thought if my pocket held copper or gold;
O! for the days when I was young!

And yet in the days when I was young,
In the days that now I remember well,
Hot words like sparks around I flung,
And snatching at honey I often was stung,
And what I have lost it's hard to tell;
So I would rather be old than young.

"All the old men I know," said Collins, "but you, would be young if they could; and none

of the young would be old. So you see most men are not of your way of thinking."

"So much the worse for them. I have tried both ends of life; and I like the last best. And what's more, I am sure so would everybody who made the most of what he has. I was a fool when I was young; and I did not know it; so I thought myself ill-treated. I am a fool now; but I do now it; and so I am content."

"It is a queer thing to be contented with."

"Not so queer maybe as you think. Burn those osiers! they're as brittle as glass. All the wise men I have ever seen,—and half a dozen have fallen in my way one how or other, who were thought special wise in their own parishes, —all of them who fancied themselves wise, have fancied too that the world was not good enough for them, and have despised the greater number of men, those, you know, with the rough dirt upon them, but right good ones many of them, nevertheless. These wise men, I say, have always supposed everything and everybody too coarse for them. I never saw one of them look right out, straight up, happy and merry. Now it all seems too good for me; and so I should be a beast if I were not contented; just as the donkey that got into the hot-house the other day, and ate up all those fine flowers and plants, and things, would have been a wonderful big jackass if it had not been satisfied, and had wanted a thistle."

"Your receipt for happiness must be a curious and precious one. I should much like to know it."

"Bless you, I have no receipt, no more than our old women have a receipt for making flour-dumpling! They do it quite naturally. And, the same way, I am as happy as can be, except when I have the rheumatism in my leg; and then I'm thankful that I'm not like to have it in the wooden one, and that, by death or some way, most likely, it won't last for ever."

"Have you no fear of death?"

"Fear! No. I'm afraid of nothing I know of, but a lady who once came to see me, and sat on that stool where Pussy is, and talked for five hours without stopping, all about her sympathy, —whatever that is,—with the poor, and something that she called the poetry of basket-making, and a deal more. I'm told she is gone out of the country; so I suppose too much *tonguiness* is made transportation now: it used to be only ducking. But even when she was here I kept on making a basket, and sang a song or two while she talked. No fear of interrupting her, you know; you might as well think to stop a windmill by whistling to it. So I could sing on quite comfortable, and not cut my manners too short either.

Those with too much cash to think of,
May the cares of life lament;
Give me but a spring to drink of,
Bread and breath, and I'm content.

While I feel that I am living,
Death's a fool to look so grim;
All who wish me dead forgiving,
When he comes I'll sing to him.

"Have you really no fear," asked Collins, "of what may happen to you hereafter?"

"No; I cannot honestly say that I have; and I'm too old to speak bashful when I don't feel it. To be sure I once took an osier, and said to myself, 'Now, I'll cut a notch on this for every sin I can remember in all my life.' I began going through the job from the time I was a baby; and a pretty lot of notches I soon had, and some of them terrible deep ones, that very nigh cut the twig right through. When I had done with it, I took another, and another, till at last I had five osiers, and nigh five hundred notches; for I told them off quite regular, a hundred on each. And when I got the five all in my hands, so,—nice likely switches they were too, before I had hacked them in that cruel sort of way,—I said to myself,—'Well, here are the rods to give my conscience a drubbing at all events.' Then I fell a-thinking and a-pondering what would come of it all; and at last I settled it all off as neat as a lady's work-basket. So I took and shoved the osiers into the fire; and, though they were too green to burn well, I got them all burned to ashes at last; and then I was a deal easier."

"An ingenious way of burning up your offences, at all events," said Collins.

"Not at all,—by no means. You're on a wrong scent there.

> The greyhound, for all he looks so fine,
> Has no more nose than this donkey of mine.

That wasn't it at all. But I began to see it in this way. Said I to myself,—'Here's a pretty baddish lot of things against me, to be sure. But then I don't know what kind of tally other folk might have to show, if they worked as many hours as I did, and cut as clean notches.' Nay, I have a pretty good guess that there are some sullen, hard sort of men, I have seen in my time, that would be a deal worse off than I; for my notion is, that I'm no worse than most, and better than some. That's no help, you'll say. Right,—very true,—none in the world. For I must be judged not by this man or t'other man, but by what I knew and might have done myself, if I had been so minded. And I don't believe, in my own mind, there's one that would have much to boast of, no, not Miss Maria Lascelles, that's as like what they say of angels as any one I know. If so be then, that we are all of us what we are, that we have none of us any right to boast, and must all be brought to nothing if we were served right, then, I want to know, is the whole world to be swept clean away and destroyed? and, if so, why was it made at all? Thinks I, that's not my way of doing with my baskets. It is a bad workman that finds his work good for nothing when

all's done, and must break it all up again. So I'm pretty certain there must be some help somewhere, if one could only find it out. Then, all of a sudden, like a flash of lightning, there came into my head all the stories I had ever heard about Jesus Christ. That silenced and steadied me all that day. I got a little boy from the school to come and read me a bit of the Bible in the evening; and then I woke up once or twice in the night and thought about it; and then I saw the whole thing as clear as daylight. I have known ever since, as sure as possible, that God never meant me to be entirely done away because of my sins; or he would not have sent any one into the world to save me. And ever since that time, which is a good while ago, I dare say a matter of thirty years or more, I have never set to work upon the tallies again, or troubled my head about them, though I know well enough that I should not make any more such deep notches if I began to cut again now. But osiers, you see, are dear; and I want them for my baskets; so I don't try. Ever since I've been as gay as a lark. Many a time, when I have seen people pulling long faces about death, I have said to myself,—'Well, I'm not clear that I would give an osier-chip to save myself dying any night of the year; only I should like to finish a basket when once I begin it.' Often and often I think I would give a trifle to wake up some morning in another world,

and see what we should look like there,—and whether I shall have my old leg again, or must make wings do instead."

Collins soon took leave of him. He afterwards discovered from others that the old man had experienced a life of misfortune, had lost wife and children and his little property in comparatively early life, and that he had now for many years worked at his trade without obtaining enough from it to supply the scantiest wants, the deficiency being made up chiefly by the charity of some neighbouring families. He was said to have preserved through life the same kindly cheerfulness, which rendered him in Collins's eyes the very model of a happy temperament.

"Well," said the recluse to himself, with a deep sigh, "I do not envy him. His poverty-stricken contentment in such circumstances is mean and slavish; and it is sad to see a rational being so satisfied with such a state of ignorance. Ignorance indeed is what the wisest must put up with. Let us however prize what largeness of existence and fulness of knowledge we can attain to,—and, comparing this lot with that of others, of such as the basketmaker, rejoice therein."

But, while he thus reflected, his look and bearing were far from indicating perfect comfort and serenity.

Chapter XXXI.

ON the following morning a packet was brought to Collins, which, as he very seldom received any communication, seemed to him an important occurrence. He looked for some time at the outside with surprise, but could guess nothing from this. On opening it, even before he had read a word, he was much moved. The handwriting of the first letter he came to was that of a woman of whom he had seen nothing and heard little for ten years. She was the siren of whom he had spoken to Maria, from whose charms he had escaped with the help of the advice of Mrs. Lascelles. The handwriting was in general of the same beautiful and bold character which he so well remembered, but had become rather weaker and less steady. The contents were to this effect.

"You will be much surprised at hearing from me, but not more than I should have been till lately, had any one proposed to me to write to you. I have never ceased indeed to feel for you warmly; but I knew that you had deliberately avoided me. Nay, I owned to myself that you were right in doing so. I need not bid you endeavour to recall the days when we saw each other frequently. I have no doubt that you remember them well. Although we never came

to an avowed understanding of each other's hearts, it was a shining glowing time for both, when we exchanged passion for passion, when your earnestness and my fancy encountered timidly yet most fondly, and we said to ourselves that this in truth was love, while we dared not say it to one another. That all this was guilt and disgrace to me, that my affection for you was crime against him to whom my fidelity was vowed, I well know. I will not add to my offence by now alleging the excuses which his character and conduct and utter indifference towards me then seemed to furnish; and to which, in living apart from me, as he did entirely for his own gratification, he appeared almost to give a public sanction. True as all this was, I nevertheless knew the right, and chose the wrong; and dwelling on these things as justifications was but a new breach of duty. I may say however that I trust you have never known what it is, in the full strength of emotion and imagination, to have no one to love, to see that all the treasures of the soul have been bestowed in vain on one who has no value for them, nay, no conception that they could have a worth, and who finds more than a compensation in the vulgarest pleasures for the devoted faith which he throws away as a cast garment. Such was my state when I knew you. I can still, after so many years,—and such years!—recall the deep rapture, mingled with trembling self-re-

proach, and, I have sometimes fancied, heightened by it, which filled my breast, when I learned to read in you all I had so vainly hoped for in another. I had no design of captivating you; but your sympathy was dearer to me than the admiration and homage of all the world; and I may now say that I am persuaded I should have given up all to possess it fully. You acted wisely, rightly, heroically, when you left me; and I can more than forgive you, I can thank you, for all the tears and groans you cost me. I then went to the seaside for my health, and lived in a lonely farm-house, away from all my acquaintances. I used to spend hours sitting on the shore, thinking of you; and so strong was the impression this period of my life made on me, that I have never since been able to hear the sound of waves, without seeing your image before me as you then were,—young, buoyant, and enthusiastic, with your kindled cheeks, and your raven hair falling wildly round your forehead. Your strange, but stirring and heartfelt words have always seemed to me mingled inseparably with the murmur of the waters. In happy dreams, which renewed my musing youth,—for when I knew you I was little more than twenty,—I have sometimes believed that we are twin spirits of the ocean, floating with visionary forms beneath the stars, and skimming with airy feet over the white foam.

"But I did not propose to write to you on this subject. My love for you,—I now dare call it by its name,—what should I not now dare? has been a source of countless pleasant and painful thoughts to me. But the events which have led me now to write to you are of a very different character; and the recollection of them perpetually corrodes me with grief and shame. For some years after we parted, I lived in a state of dreary indifference, occupying myself as I could with society, literature, and all the beautiful arts. I had become acquainted with an illustrious musical composer, whose music had a character of strong feeling and sublime imagination, to me peculiarly elevating and delightful. Sometimes I visited the infirm old man, who was almost blind, and could not rise from his chair, yet under the inspiration of his art awoke into divine energy. I sang the favourite airs of his own composition to him, while he touched the piano, and now and then gave me a suggestion or a criticism of memorable felicity. There was a poet also familiar with him, for whose words some of his most perfect melodies had been created. He too was in the habit of visiting this harmonious enchanter, who sometimes laid a song before me newly produced by both, and asked me to sing it for him. I willingly did so; and some of these strains were so exquisite, and gave me such high enjoyment, that I probably sang with more force

and expression in the dark and narrow room of the old man, with none but him near me, than I ever gave to the most admired of my performances, such as they were, in the midst of crowded and applauding circles. In the musician's study, near the instrument before which he sat, while I stood beside him, a door-way led into another room, which I knew to be a small cabinet of books; and this opening was closed, not by a door, but a green curtain. On one occasion, on which I had been singing with much pleasure to myself, and to the satisfaction of my friend and master, I had ended the song, a new one by the poet before mentioned, the air of which closed in a long pathetic flow of deepest emotion, such that the poet afterwards compared it to the last bright soft sunset before the commencing deluge. At the instant when my voice sank into silence, I heard a slight rustling near me; and looking round I saw the curtain drawn aside, and held in one hand by a man, whose other hand, as well as his countenance, expressed the highest attention and sympathy. As my eyes caught his, he did not retire, but came forward, and apologized for his intrusion, by saying that he had been engaged in arranging some verses in the cabinet for our common friend. I found that it was the poet. I afterwards learned from him that he had several times already been the unseen auditor of my

singing. His fame was such, and such my estimation of him, and his manners and language were so winning, that I could not be displeased. And thus began our intimacy: a fairy sky indeed before a black deluge.

"Thus began my knowledge of a man, from whom the strongest interest of my subsequent life has been derived. He was,—he doubtless still is,—a person whose appearance and manners are admirably in accordance with the nobler gifts of genius and knowledge. He is distinguished by a tranquil and unfailing dignity, graceful beyond all that I have seen in man, and produced doubtless, allowing for his bodily advantages, in a great degree by his lively and predominant sense of the beautiful and the appropriate in all things. In him eloquence is a various and finished art, embodying and harmonizing a most abundant natural faculty; and I should have thought it altogether unrivalled, had I not once known a far more fervid, generous, and lofty spirit, pouring itself forth in somewhat ruder accents. But he also possesses a pliancy and panoramic largeness of mind, peculiarly his own, so that he perpetually surprises and attracts by his swift and direct comprehension of all shapes and sides of human character, which shows itself as well in the common intercourse of life, as in the poetic creations to which he devotes his serious efforts. Being

such as he is, you cannot wonder that, in the dull and shapeless mass of ordinary society, this man blazed like a fiery gem.

"At the time when I became familiar with him, I was inclined to take a sad but resigned view of all things, fancying that, as to our ultimate destination, we can know nothing; all the distance round being but cloud and darkness, and nothing remaining for us but as much as possible to light and adorn the narrow circle in which for the moment we are moving. In him I did not meet with any opposition to my own views. But I found that gradually, while I learned to know him better, my daily and immediate sphere seemed to grow wider and more beautiful. The dark and solid horizon melted into clear air. He covered the soil with fairer herbage and flowers, and shaded it with enchanted groves, and peopled it with gayer and statelier figures. From all the real incidents and persons we met with, he drew out new meanings, and wrought them together into rounded and dramatic groups. In his hands every material object seemed to become plastic, and yielded to his shaping touch, while he expanded and harmonized it into an intelligible representative of some grand idea or delicate sentiment. Every one also around us grew happier and less barren under the spell of his wise and creative sympathy. Thus I found the two processes going on together, the revival of my

own spirit, and that of the whole world I lived in. My feelings in this new state of being were not indeed those of my first early and devoted love, nearest of all earthly affections to religion,—unhesitating, fond, ecstatic, with a ceaseless thrilling sense of new-found life, and with an awful apprehension of a blessed mystery, encompassing both me and him I loved. My relation to my new friend rather brightened and enlarged the common and the cheap, and enabled me to make the best of the inevitable, and to smooth and embellish my road over the earth, though it gave me no wings for mounting into air.

"Thus I thought of him when first we became intimate with each other. But gradually I better understood and was more strongly interested in the inexhaustible resources of his talents, and his power, not of assuming as a disguise, but of shaping himself into every diversity of brilliant and striking life. I learned also to love him more, and to value his apparent admiration more highly. I began to ask myself whether this calmer but more complete mutual intelligence, this clear and friendly view over the world around us, this freedom from exaggerating illusion, and this enjoyment of the whole genius of a man, than whom none probably is more entirely and profusely cultivated, was not well worth all that I had ever known of headlong passion, of flaming imagination, and dizzy self-abandonment. I often

shrank from saying, yes, to the question. But at least I thought, what I now possess is the best substitute for earlier delight which time and calamity have left me.

"I saw this man in the midst of London society, where he was necessarily the central figure of many circles. Those who did not at all appreciate his powers, and to whom his poems appeared tame, trifling, and obscure, yet felt the necessity of his presence, and were fascinated by the clear and graceful word, which solved whatever riddle came to hand, and was always spoken at the right time. More than others I enjoyed his superiority; for I understood him better than all but a few, and received more attention from him than any. To this hour I cannot remember, without some surprise, how much I learned from him even in the course of a few months. He taught me to see a world in art akin to, but distinct from, the natural one, and representing all its rude vast wilderness of facts in sunny and transparent imagery. The Beautiful became for me the highest object of existence; to see it and reproduce it the noblest aim of human effort. Not at all that I or my friend supposed all things to exist only for the purpose of being purified and recombined into beautiful symbols. But he taught me that there is an element of beauty in whatever is most evil, and that the highest of our many faculties and tasks is that of discovering

this, and employing it in such shapes as shall make it manifest to the apprehension of men. But I will not now review the many sides on which this idea was presented to me, and how much in history and literature was called up by the necromancy of his intellect to strengthen me in these opinions and sympathies. It is useless to linger over the tale. I found in short that, the more I grew to know and admire him, the more divided I insensibly became from all my other acquaintances and friends. Some of course were jealous of my influence over him; some affected a moral disapprobation, which some doubtless felt. The tide of opinion had set against me; and many were determined to go with it wherever it might lead or mislead them. He continued to woo me as a minstrel lover, and to instruct me as a sage teacher, but also to laugh at many scruples of those around us, and say that it was idle to listen to moral saws and maxims, very right for those who need them, but inapplicable to persons more highly cultivated than the crowd. 'Our life,' he would say, 'may be a complete, graceful, earnest poem, in spite of those who censure without appreciating us.' I found myself also less bound by the opinion of society; for, while more strongly drawn to him, I was more and more separated from every one else. In fact he had formed a border of delicate plants around me, and led me to tend them carefully, unheeding, till

too late, when I found myself imprisoned in a hedge of thorns and poison flowers. Still I fancied myself contented so long as he was with me. He too appeared to feel as I, nay, became more and more devoted. Some of the loveliest poems with which he bewitched the world, were suggested by his passion for me; nay, a few of his songs were but versifications of passages in my letters to him. In a word,—for I have loitered too weakly already,—I became wholly his, but not before I fancied that he was no less entirely my own. It is idle in me to talk of shame, guilt, remorse. I talked of these once as others do, and as people hear them talked of in sermons. Now I know them; and oh, how sharply has the knowledge been forced upon me!

"In the mean time he never abandoned his position in that society, from which, for his sake, I had excluded myself. He mingled in it as much as before, and was no less wondered at and observed, while he laboured in private at my side in the creation of works, which daily gained more approbation, and that of a more valuable kind. But I was not happy. My sorrow however was only one ingredient in a potion which contained much of passion, enthusiasm, romance, in a word, of deep, delightful, and, strange as it may seem, I will add, of unselfish love. Such was my state, when, on the morrow of a day, most of which he had passed with me, I received a note from him,

saying that he had found it absolutely necessary, in order to complete a work he had undertaken on the different periods of art, that he should again visit Italy. He was about to set out in two or three days. 'You know,' he said, 'how much I dislike all painful scenes that excite and exhaust the feelings, but leave no profitable result behind. It will be happier for us both that we should not meet again. I trust that in my absence you may form some tie which will at least replace all that you must lose in me. Agreeable and instructive occupations you cannot want. In particular I would recommend to you the art of lithographic drawing, in which I think you likely to excel, and which seems capable of much improvement.'

"Such was the farewell of a man for whom I had sacrificed all that a woman can give or lose. I was too completely crushed by the blow to make him any answer. My health gave way along with so much else. He wrote to me two or three times during the year he was in Italy, and affected to believe my answers must have miscarried. They had never been written. It is now two years since his return. I refused to see him on his making the proposal. I am now dying, without a friend near me, and with no consolation but that which I derive from the certainty of my own repentance for the much of evil in my life, and that I now long and groan

towards good in every form of it I know, not from the hope of any selfish gain, but for its own excellence, and from the deep conviction that the sense of beauty is but the thin dream, of which pure sanctity is the waking life. I have but one request to make to any one on earth, which is, that you will convey the accompanying papers to Walsingham. They are the letters and poems which he addressed to me. Inside the cover I have written the words,—'I forgive, as I pray to be forgiven.' You need not fear therefore that you will be the messenger of any weak reproaches. If your voice can add aught likely to move his heart, and awaken some consciousness in him of the amazing reality of those feelings, which have been to him through life only most refined and elaborate playthings, I pray you to do it. To yourself I would only say,—Hope in all that is good. Believe in it,—love it, not with the love of passion, but with that of your whole being,—mind, heart, and conscience. Do this; and you will in time find peace, perhaps where you now least expect it. Think of me as now, in dying, the true sister of your spirit,

SELINA."

Chapter XXXII.

ACCOMPANYING this letter was one from a medical man unknown to Collins, announcing that the packet of papers had been given him by his patient on her death-bed, with an earnest request that it might be sent immediately after her decease. Her death had been calm and Christian; and she had desired that a stone should be placed upon her grave, bearing this inscription,—"Here lies a Woman, a Sinner, a Victim, and a Penitent."

When Collins had indulged the feelings caused by this communication for an hour, he walked to the Mount in search of Walsingham. He did not at all change his common grey dress; and he arrived at the house with his staff in his hand, weary, travel-stained, and excited. He might not have easily gained access at the moment to the man he sought; but Maria happened to see him; and observing from his look and tone that he was in a disturbed mood, and full of serious care, she asked him no question, but opened a door into the library, and said, "I believe you will find him there." Through an arch at the opposite end of the room, he now saw Walsingham, seated in a smaller study at a table, and with a book before him. The stained glass window threw a crimson glory on his noble face.

As Collins approached with a strong and hasty step, the poet rose, and met him with a gentle smile, expressed his pleasure at seeing him, and begged him to sit down. The recluse had the packet of papers in his hand, which he held out, and said: "I am sorry the pleasure is not mutual. I am come on a painful errand, which these papers will explain. Perhaps the nature of it will occur to you, when I recall the name of Selina, and tell you that she is now dead."

"Dead!" said Walsingham, with a tone of sincere surprise and grief; and, as he took the packet, he sank back into his seat, and leaned his head upon his hand, with which he hid his eyes. He remained thus for some minutes, when Collins said, "Dead! and by whom slain, you probably can best divine."

Walsingham looked up with grave wonder and some scorn; and after a pause, replied, "Oh, I see: you mean to accuse me of her death. A fancy founded doubtless on her own statements. Poor Selina! She had an infinite depth of love, but as little wisdom as the shallowest of female natures."

"The greater the crime of practising on her folly."

"So be it. There are few graves of those whom we have known at all intimately, on which error of some kind does not sit, and accuse and revile us as we pass along. We have something

better however to do than to reply. As well might one turn back to answer the scoffings of the voices, which beset the traveller up the mountain in the Arabian Tale."

"Is this then all,—a wretched filagree comparison, half a jest, and all a falsehood,—which you can give as lamentation for her whose heart you broke?"

"My calmness is perhaps more suitable under the eye of death, than your mad, boyish anger. But we gain nothing by this inappropriate dispute. If you have discharged your commission, I thank you for your pains; if not, pray do so without delay. I would fain be at leisure to recall the pictures of the past, with which these letters, if they be what I suppose, are closely connected."

"The letters are your own. I have not read them, as I had no spurious ambition of writing a romance, and finding matter to garnish it in every forgotten heap of rubbish. I know well with what a pretence of passionate feeling they must be filled; or they could never have obtained any sympathy from a heart like hers."

"I daresay some of them are love-letters; but assuredly they contain no binding pledges that my life was to be wasted in playing with the tangles of Selina's hair. But, Mr. Collins, I know how she once felt towards you; and I can understand and forgive your present emotion.

Your judgement of me is perhaps, from your point of view, very natural; but, if you have fulfilled the purpose of this visit, I again beg of you to leave me to my own reflections."

"I would gladly do so, if I had any expectation they would prove as painful as they ought. I have little hope however of changing a settled iciness of heart, so long accustomed to be played over by the northern lights of fancy, and therewith to be content. Could you only learn what a base and gaudy reptile you seemed at the last to her,—you now seem to me,—you would at least shrink from a contempt far sterner than any you can pretend to feel. With all your fame and selfish lie-begetting genius, I have known many a poor handicraftsman worthier than you to have been loved by her, and whose name I would rather be able now to join with hers on her untimely but most welcome tomb."

Walsingham started up, trembling as he rose, while Collins, before he spoke, turned his back upon him, and strode out of the room.

In a few minutes the poet began to read deliberately through the letters and papers; and he soon embodied the results of his reflection on them in some hasty stanzas. He afterwards recurred to the scene between himself and Collins, and came to the conclusion that it resembled one which might be worth painting between Luther and Leo X. "Collins," he thought,

"would probably be as well pleased with the part of the reformer, which I assign him, as I with that of the cultivated and genial man, no true head perhaps of Christendom, but a worthy Pope of the Fine Arts. After all, St. Peter's is like to stand as long as the Reformation." The verses were these.

There was a maid who held a lute,
And sat beside a fountain's brim;
And while she sang the woods were mute,
And heard through all their arches dim.

She sang, "O! life, thou weary boon,
'Tis love that makes thee sad to me:
And thou, O Love! wilt leave me soon;
For Grief's cold kiss has poisoned thee.

"O life! O love! O woeful heart!
I sing for one who cannot hear;
Thou, water, can'st not ease my smart;
Ye summer leaves, my wreath is sere.

"Thou lute, how oft thy strains were sweet
To him who cannot hear thee now!
My heart and fingers idly beat;
Two useless toys are I and thou."

I saw the maid, I heard the song
Amid the heedless foliage sigh;
I turned away and wandered long,
Or sat and dreamt beneath the sky.

I mused amid a lonely glen;
Where trees, and winds, and streams were all,
And thought how shrieks from Sorrow's den
Re-echo every madrigal.

From each delight of human hearts,
That finds within those caves a tomb,
A ghost inevitable starts,
And haunts, as rightful prince, the gloom.

But not supreme the spectres reign;
And oft a younger joyous crew
Will scare away the goblin train,
And bless the radiant halls anew.

I turned and sought the fountain's glade;
And Grief and Bliss, a sister pair,
Two nymphs, came glimmering through the shade,
And seemed to speed me smoothly there.

Again I saw the fountain flow;
I heard the trees around it wave;
But caught no lute's melodious woe
I only found a grassy grave.

Chapter XXXIII.

ON that evening Collins returned, weary, sad, and scornful, to his cottage, and sat solitary in the room where he had received Walsingham and Maria. The old servant, who was accustomed to observe his humour, saw that he was disturbed and melancholy, and kept out of his way. Thus he remained alone, in his old elm-wood arm-chair, with his eyes fixed upon the floor, while darkness closed around him. The ticking of the ancient clock, in its tall brown case, the scarcely audible murmur of the rivulet at the bottom of

the garden, and the rise and fall of the light wind among the trees about the cottage, were the only sounds he heard. Even these he was hardly sensible of; for his thoughts were intent on the matters that lay nearest and most inward to him, —his passion for Selina,—his hate of Walsingham,—his tender reverence for Maria,—his grateful devotion to her mother's memory,—and, as lying in the same range of feeling, and akin in depth, although not outwardly connected with these, the vague raw strivings of his political partisanship, ending in a bloody woe. These were the closest and most personal themes of emotion which his life supplied, and therefore those which extended furthest, and seemed to him fullest of the infinite and imperishable. Life, Death, Destiny, Mischance, Error, Remorse, Despair, contempt of All and of Himself, these, none of them exclusively possessing him, were all by turns with him.

That however which chiefly occupied him, was the image of Selina, as he had formerly seen her, — the large and blooming form, with its sunny colouring and glow of life, which, in his youthful season of fancy and eagerness, had been to him the descending apparition of all Olympian beauty. — "How fondly," he thought, — "how deliriously did I love her! What islands of Atlantis and Utopia did I not people with our imagined loves! And all this I left at the command of severe wisdom,—rather for her sake

even than my own. And all this was enjoyed to satiety by another; and then the believing, credulous, misguided, devoted heart was given up to its own lonely despair; and left to find a ratification of the world's contempt in the bitter sense of its own weakness."

Hardly had the reflection occurred to him, before he was ashamed and sorrow-stricken at having mingled any base jealousy on his own account, with his pure grief for Selina's fate, and his righteous indignation against Walsingham. "So," he thought, "it is with man, ever giving the mark and trappings of the absolute and infinite to the petty and individual. Yet even thus he shows his indomitable tendency to strive towards a higher than what he is. So Appearance is never a mere and gratuitous falsehood, but the ready and immediate substitute for Being, of which during a time it assumes the name and attributes. It is the servant, who wearing his master's clothes and title, goes before him to prepare the way, and prefigures his postponed arrival. But with me at least this servile and heraldic ministration of falsehood to truth, is, I trust, for ever at an end; and I can no longer bear to exchange greetings or keep terms of alliance with that which is not what it seems. Jealousy!—Revenge!—down, down! and wear no more the austere and divine aspect of Truth and Right. Yet even with this rigid separa-

tion of myself and my own feelings from the whole matter, still it remains a dark puzzle. I cannot execute vengeance on Walsingham. The blade with which I sought to stab him would start back from the airy shade of Selina interposed between. Nay, at all events, it were better to leave him fluttering idly over the slime, in which at last, when his wings fail, he will assuredly be caught and sink. She sleeps calmly; or at least the tomb conceals and locks her present state of suffering beyond our reach. It is I who remain here, the object of my own hideous thoughts, and find myself again, after years of enforced calm, distracted and tortured with the same pangs and remembrances, from which I have already given so much of my life-blood to buy an uneasy and insecure escape. It is unmanly, weak, pitiable to give way. It were nobler, more Titanic, to struggle on. Yet struggle leading only to fresh struggle, without a hope of final peace, wastes and grinds down the spirit, if it does not issue in immediate defeat and death. O that some signal were given from the loftier circles of this frame of things, and that, by it empowered, I could sink into sea-deep oblivion!"

One,—two,—three,—the clock sounded as he muttered to himself, and so on to twelve.

The sound broke up the dream of his existence; and many minds awoke within a single

breast, Edmonstone, — Harcourt, — Wilson,— Hastings, — Musgrave, —Walsingham, — Collins, —all were there. With the feelings of these several lives came the recollection of the history of each, seen in long perspective through its own particular doorway, and all meeting in the central chamber of the one consciousness. In due relation to each were seen the several figures connected with it,—Maria,—Ann,—the old man of the Araxes,—the Caffre girl,—the Armenian merchant,—Henry and his wife Elizabeth, and the poor of Musgrave's parish,—Selina, and the poet's troop of phantoms,—Everard,—Andrews, and the slain victim of Collins's politics. Amid these living and dead ones, and many more of both, encircling each of the central shadows, the eye found no fixed point of vision, and the bewildered heart no peace. The gazer hovered uncertain, as a bird, that has wandered from its master, floats in air above a host of men, and in vain seeks the one to whom alone it would return. He perhaps in the mean while pines in a prison, or moulders in the grave.

But to the seeking weary spirit one form presented itself amid all these, older, feebler, poorer, more ignorant, more helpless, more bereft, more scorned than all,—the crippled basket-maker. "Knowledge, talents, wealth, love, youth, zeal,—all these I have in vain experienced. But one trial more remains for me,—to sink to the lowest

of conditions, as I have fruitlessly attempted so many higher ones." He spoke the name of the poor solitary old man sharply and abruptly. The world of spectres, vaguer than life, and of too intense realities, disappeared from the chamber of the Recluse, and left him to repose.

Chapter XXXIV.

MARIA was walking in the wood where she had conversed with Collins; and, as she passed the gate, she was surprised to see peering above it the head of the old basket-maker, whom she had never before known to come so far from home. She walked lightly up to him, with a smiling face, and asked him whom he wanted to see?

"You, miss."

"Well, what can I do for you? Is it money you wish for?"

"No; all the money Mr. Nugent has would now be of little use to me. I have few wants, miss; and now I feel I have not long to live. But, if you would do me a kindness, you must let me have my own way for this once."

He saw assent in her face, and opening the gate entered the wood. Then looking round him he said, "It is near twenty years since I

was here last. The trees have grown well. Miss, please to follow me."

So saying, in spite of his lameness, he walked on vigorously before her, and led the way to the most retired corner of the plantation. The path was nearly overgrown with weeds, and led to a diminutive streamlet, hardly beyond the size of a ditch, crossed by a single plank by way of bridge. Beyond this lay a thicket composed chiefly of evergreens, which looked peculiarly gloomy in the midst of the full and glittering summer foliage of the deciduous trees around them. The ground under their dark boughs was ragged and neglected; and the old seat, which stood in the centre of a small clear space, was also overgrown with moss.

"Here," said Fowler, "it was. Now, will you sit down there, while I lean against this tree?"

So saying he leant his back against the stem of a yew-tree, which grew close to the end of the bench. On this Maria seated herself; for it was plain from the manner of the old man that he was perfectly in earnest, and had some serious purpose in view. He was under the dark canopy of branches; but a ray of light fell full on her; and in her white dress she might have seemed a figure of snow, or of polished silver, in the midst of a scene and images of bronze. She looked at Fowler from under her

straw-bonnet with some wonder and anxiety, but with unalterable kindness, and waited till he should speak. He turned down his bright blue eyes for some time, leaning both hands upon his staff, and then looked at her.

"It is now," he said, "nineteen years since I was last in this spot. At that time Mr. Nugent was away in the army up at London or somewhere; and he let Mr. Lascelles live in the manor-house. Mrs. Lascelles, who was one of the best women I ever saw, had just brought him a girl; and they had lost two or three children before. I lived then at a cottage down by the mill, a mile and a half from this, and had my daughter with me. My wife and all my other children were gone; and my daughter Mary was a widow, with one little boy. He and his mother too have been taken since. She had buried her husband away on the sea-coast, and was come back to me to lie in. A few days after this, late in the evening, I heard a tap at my door; and I remember my little grandson woke up, and said, 'Grandfather, there's a noise; do you think it is a ghost?' Poor child! he went soon after to a better place. I opened the door, and saw Mr. Lascelles. He looked very pale and distressed; and he said to me, 'Fowler, I cannot stay now to speak to you; for I should be missed at home. But come up to the furthest gate of the wood behind the house,'—that's where I came in just

now,—'to-morrow morning at six o'clock; and I will meet you there.' He slipped a guinea into my hand, and hurried away. I was much puzzled and surprised; and, after I went to bed, I lay awake for half an hour thinking what it could mean. However the guinea served to buy some gruel that night for my daughter, and something too for little Thomas. The next morning I went up at six o'clock, and found Mr. Lascelles waiting at the gate. He told me to follow him, and walked before me to this place; and when we got here he turned sharp round upon me, and said, 'Fowler, will you save my wife's life?' At first I thought that he was mad; and I could not answer anything; but I looked at him where he stood,—there where your foot now is. Then his face seemed to shiver, and grew pale, and then red again, and he said, 'Fowler, do you want to kill Mrs. Lascelles; or will you save her life?' and he stepped close to me, and caught my arm, and looked hard into my face with the strangest, sharp, sorrowful look I ever saw. I could hardly speak; but I said, 'To be sure, sir, I'll do whatever I can, unless it is something wrong. If you want that, I'll see and pay you back your guinea somehow before long.' At this he looked quieter, and said, 'My guinea! Pooh! what signifies that? Listen, and I'll tell you what I want. You know I have lost all the children I have had except this one; and Mrs. Lascelles was almost heart-broken

before this was born, thinking she should lose it too in a few months. The child is a girl; and, since its birth, a week ago, it has been growing every day punier and punier; and the mother, what between her weak state from her confinement, and her grief for the poor baby, has grown quite ill. She is in a high fever and delirious, and is always asking for the child, and crying. Even if she should grow a little better, and find it dead, the doctor says that very likely she might go too. It would be a hard thing, Fowler, to lose a wife one loves.' Then I looked at him too, and said, 'You may say that, sir; it's a deal worse than to lose a leg.' So he went on this way—'Now I want to know, will you prevent this with no loss to yourself?'—'I prevent it, sir! What can I do? I am not a doctor, much less God, to save the poor child's life, or Mrs. Lascelles's.'—'Oh,' he answered, 'you can do everything. You have a daughter, who has been just confined too, and her baby is a girl, is it not?'—There he stopped; and it all came across me like a blaze of fire; and I thought I should have fallen down. But then again he took my hand, and pressed it very hard, and looked into my face that odd way. His eyes were filling with tears; and he said,—'Will you persuade your daughter to give me that baby? She has another child, I know; and you and she will be able to do better for it. Besides the one she parts with will be

brought up as Mrs. Lascelles's own: so you may be sure it will want for nothing; and I shall always be grateful to you and yours for the best service any one could render me.'—This all came on me together; and I could only say,—'Well, sir, but my little grandchild,—poor baby, it is but ill off now,' I said, 'and likely to be worse,—my grandchild will not be the same thing to Mrs. Lascelles as her own. Had not you better wait till she gets stronger? and if so be that God pleases to take her girl, why then she may choose another for herself.'—'Fowler,' he said, 'she'll never grow stronger if she loses this child. She must never know of the exchange. Before the baby dies,—and it has not many hours to live,—the other must be put in its place while she sleeps, or is too confused in her head to know what we are doing. Then, when she comes round a little, and sees the child strong and well, no doubt she'll recover too. She must never know it;'—and he said the word *never* as if he wanted to nail the notion into my head. I felt quite puzzled and unsteady, and did not know what to say. There was the thought of the poor lady's death, and Mr. Lascelles's grief, and perhaps his death too; for to be sure no one ever loved his wife more than he; and then I thought how ill I could do for my daughter and her children, how often they would be likely to want food and clothes and fire, and what worse would become of them if I died; and

after pondering a minute or two, I said,—'Sir, you shall have the child, if I can manage it.'"

The whole story had gradually been unfolding itself in Maria's mind, though in her amazement she had much difficulty to comprehend it perfectly. At last she exclaimed,—"Do you mean that I am your granddaughter, and not the child of Mrs. Lascelles?"

Startled at her tone of voice, he answered hurriedly,—"That, and nothing else, is what I mean."

Then rose an agony of grief in her. She covered her face with both her hands; and her head sank down upon her lap. Her limbs too failed; and she slid off the bench until she knelt upon the ground. Fowler was bewildered between habitual respect for her station, and fond affection for herself; and he thought that he had best let her weep on for some minutes. Then he went to her and touched her arm. She shrank from him hastily, but the next instant seized the great brown furrowed hand, and pressed it to her lips. She rose from her knees, and sat down again upon the bench, and desired him to sit beside her. "Tell me," she said, "what became of my mother?"

"She lost her little boy by hooping-cough; and then she too pined away and died. They are both buried with my wife and our other children in the churchyard of the old church that was

burned the other night. It was still used now and then for burying in those days."

This brought back to Maria her presence there, and all the scene with Walsingham, and more vividly than anything before suggested to her the change of her position in the world. She tried however to fix her thoughts upon the obscure grave and history of her mother, and to find her own reality in these new circumstances. Of Mrs. Lascelles she did not dare to think. But at last she asked again,—"Who was my father?"

"He was a fisherman twenty miles from this, and a very good young man. But he was drowned; and his wife was obliged to return to me. His name was Williams."

She mused for a few moments, and gathering strength and courage said to Fowler, "My name then is Williams too. But there are other things that I must know, in order to do what is right." —Then, by several distinct questions, she drew from him the account, of which the following facts are a summary.

Mr. Lascelles had himself gone for the child at night, together with the medical man, taking the corpse of his own baby to Fowler's cottage. This was buried a day or two afterwards as the child of Mrs. Williams. Her living infant was in the mean time conveyed to the Mount; and, as Mrs. Lascelles was far too ill to observe accurately, and the room was kept darkened, there was no

difficulty in deceiving her. She then gradually recovered her health, and soon became perfectly well. Mr. Lascelles had said to Fowler, that he should immediately make a will, bequeathing all his property to Maria after his wife's death, with an annuity to Fowler and his daughter. He premised however that this had not been done, as he had not since received any payment; and the omission was easily explained; for Mr. Lascelles was killed a very few months afterwards by a fall from his horse. Mrs. Lascelles then removed to London, in order to be near her mother and other friends. The nurse, who alone among the servants knew of the exchange, had long been dead. The medical man had gone to reside in the metropolis; and of his further history Fowler knew nothing. But he produced from an old tin snuff-box a certificate of the principal fact written by Mr. Lascelles himself, and signed both by him and the surgeon.

The sight of this paper again agitated Maria violently; for, although she had no doubt before of the truth of the narrative, this seemed at once to bring it into the class of admitted and commonplace facts. Everything which seemed to separate her from Mrs. Lascelles was to her excruciating. But she felt the necessity of decision and external calmness, and would think only of what was to be done.

"Why," she said, "*did you not* tell me this sooner?"

"Why should I? You were happy; and so was I. And I did not know what change it might make for you, if I spoke of matters that had happened twenty years ago. But now I think I shall not live much longer; and I could not die quietly without telling you the truth. But I shall never speak a word of it to any one else. So you must settle for yourself whether you choose anything to be done about it."

"I shall at once tell Mr. and Mrs. Nugent the whole story. What they may wish I do not know. But I will send to inform you as soon as possible. In the mean time take this," giving him the contents of her purse; "I must not have money, and you be in want of it."

The old man looked at her with glistening and delighted eyes, and exclaimed, "Well, when I have seen you, I have often thought you are a deal prettier than ever your poor mother was, though she was the prettiest girl in the parish; but I never knew you look half so beautiful before. Perhaps, when I see you again, if that ever happens, it may be settled that you shall be nothing more to me than a fine young lady; and I dare say that would be best for us both. But I should like that you would give your old grandfather one kiss before he dies." She threw her arms about his neck, and kissed him repeatedly, while the tears ran down his face. "Now," he said, "dear Miss Maria, you had best go to the

house, and leave me to get home at my own pace. You will have plenty to think of no doubt. But at all events you may believe that you are dearer to poor old Jack Fowler, than to any of the great folks you have been living among. I never saw the tail of your gown go by without praying God to bless you; and, when you used to come down here from London, I always fancied He had sent an angel into the country to do everybody good. God bless you, my darling! God bless you, and make you as happy as I wish you, and as good as the Virgin Mary!"

Chapter XXXV.

WHEN Maria had reached her own room, she threw herself upon her knees, and prayed for strength to do what was right in all things, and to bear whatever might happen to her meekly and cheerfully.

She then sat down, and began to reflect upon the steps to be taken. Her heart was full of the memory of Mrs. Lascelles, who had been far more to her than a common mother, and who had died in the belief that Maria was her child. But she knew that now was not the time for these feelings, and turned away from them in order to act decidedly. The question as to Mr. Nugent's

determination was far from clear. He was a haughty, self-indulgent man, full of concentrated family pride, and believing that there was a specific virtue in the blood of his ancestors to render their descendants a race altogether apart in merit and dignity from the rest of mankind. The notion that any one not thus distinguished should appear as a sharer of the Nugent privileges, even on the mother's side, was very likely to strike him as an unheard-of profanation. It might possibly seem to him an imposture violating the most sacred principles of human existence, and entailing nothing less than infamy on any one who should connive at it. As to the question of money, Maria knew that her supposed father had possessed a considerable fortune; but this, she believed, arose entirely from the produce of a Cornish mine, which, she understood, had now ceased to be profitable. She had little doubt moreover that he had not left a will, and that she therefore would at all events possess no claim. Her supposed mother's small fortune, she also believed, had come to her by inheritance, not bequest; as indeed Mrs. Lascelles could have no reason for making a testamentary disposition in favour of an only child, who would naturally succeed to her possessions. Any provision from this source she would therefore also be deprived of; and at all events she would have had much hesitation in taking advantage of a bequest made

under an erroneous belief as to her birth. Thus she saw clearly that she was now altogether dependent on Mr. Nugent, who had always professed the intention of making her his heir, but who would now assuredly abandon any such design, and might very possibly even dismiss her from his regard and protection. Mrs. Nugent abounded in good-will, of a very ordinary and undiscerning stamp, but, as to all more serious matters, was a mere instrument of her husband's decrees. She bought some latitude of indulgence by an idolatrous veneration for his wisdom in everything on which he condescended to exert it.

Having thus reviewed the chief circumstances of her situation, she wrote a full account of all she had heard from Fowler, which she addressed to Mr. Nugent, and begged to know what he might decide. She sent the letter to him by a servant within two hours of her return to the house. Having done this, her heart, though still deeply agitated, felt much lighter; and she leant her head upon her hand, and retraced all her life with Mrs. Lascelles, even in the most minute detail, as if on occasion of a second death-bed, again taking leave for ever of the only being whom she had known as a mother. She took out, and looked at all the little outward tokens of warm and pure maternal affection, a miniature which she had always worn, a bracelet of her hair, a paper of practical directions for her

conduct in life, and some fragments of written prayer for her welfare. Long and sadly did she contemplate these things, and revolved the mystery of that relation, so far higher and holier than the outward and natural one, which had constituted, and would for ever maintain the guide and guardian of her childhood as the true and imperishable mother of her spirit.

She was left alone to the indulgence of these reflections till near evening, when her maid knocked at the door, and delivered a letter to her, which, she said, had been given to her by Mr. Nugent's man. Maria dismissed her, and with a firm hand opened the paper, which had no direction, but the contents of which ran thus.

"DEAR MISS WILLIAMS,—I address you by the name, which, I learn from your communication, you must henceforth bear, because it can never be too soon to act upon a sense of duty. You will not expect me to write very coherently, while indignant, as I now must be, at the unprincipled deception so long practised upon me. Not that I mean at all severely to blame you. I have no doubt, from all I have seen of you, that you would have shrunk with just horror from assuming any claim to the blood of my family. Even if, as I cannot but suspect, you have sometimes had instinctive suspicions, — providential

intimations, as it were,—that your birth did not entitle you to the position you were placed in, yet I cannot wonder that these were speedily suppressed by the consideration of the distinction you thus attained, to say nothing of the ease and elegance of your life, which, I candidly confess, I esteem of less importance. Neither do I unconditionally condemn my late sister, who from her ancestors doubtless had derived a sense of honour that must have prevented her from intruding any one of obscure descent into our family. I cannot however but suppose that in earlier life, and when nearer to the plebeian source of your existence, your disposition and appearance must have betrayed some traces of vulgarity, exquisitely painful to your supposed mother. I can only presume therefore that a due regard to her husband's memory withheld her from indulging any doubt on the subject, especially as, without even fancying any such substitution as had unhappily taken place, it might have been believed that the signs of rusticity and meanness had arisen naturally from him, as I have heard that one of his grandmothers was little better than a farmer's daughter. For him indeed I reserve my whole moral disapprobation, contempt, and disgust. If forging the name of a commercial house to a piece of paper, which can only lead to the loss of money,—so deservedly undervalued by all moral writers,—be *justly thought worthy* of

painful, disgraceful, nay, even of capital punishment, how can we rate the guilt of a culprit sufficiently high, who has deliberately forged the name of an honourable family,—for the Lascelles's are decidedly gentlemen,—to a child, to a living progeny of beggars, fishermen, peasants, and I know not whom,—nay has involved an ancestry in this disgrace, beyond comparison more distinguished, whom, through his wife, he has thus attempted to stain with indelible contamination? Far, far better had my sister perished honourably, rather than be saved by such an artifice, and live in some degree to aid in so basely deluding me. It is doubtless an ordinance of the Divine mercy, which left him without a son, who might possibly have inherited his laxity of principle. But I restrain my outraged feelings from regard to you, who would perhaps be pained by the expression of them in their full force.

"As to yourself, my dear Miss Williams, it will be obvious to your good sense, which for a person of your birth certainly does you credit, that you have lived in my family only as my niece; and, the error being cleared up, I owe it to myself to take care, however reluctantly, that you should no longer occupy the same situation. Indeed your continuance in this house, even as a humble companion of Mrs. Nugent, would be so distressing to me, as reminding me of the deception I have suffered from, as well as to Mrs.

Nugent, who always governs her views by mine, that I could not think myself justified in so lacerating all our most sacred sentiments and principles. You derive no property from Mr. Lascelles; and that of Mrs. Lascelles, my late sister, now reverts to me as her brother. I am far however from desiring that you should be left without the means of subsistence in the rank of life which you must now belong to, and to which your origin so naturally consigns you. I therefore propose to settle the sum of fifty pounds per annum on you, both as an act of charity, and as marking my general approbation of your conduct. I also wish you to remain in this house for a day or two, until you can make arrangements for quitting it. You will always find a sincere friend in me; and it must be a relief to your mind to know that I do not consider you as in any serious degree guilty of the foul and profligate treachery which has been exercised towards me. Believe me, my dear Miss Williams, very sincerely yours,

"WALTER ALGERNON SIDNEY NUGENT."

Chapter XXXVI.

WELL as Maria thought she knew the writer of this letter, she was hardly prepared for all its contents; and she could not suppress her wonder at many expressions in it. She took a few hours however to consider what she should do, and sent to beg that she might be excused from appearing at dinner. The most pressing object was to communicate with her grandfather; but for this purpose the only person she could apply to at the moment was the old housekeeper. The good woman heard the story of her birth with amazement and bitter grief, and readily undertook to go to Fowler that evening, and say that Maria was soon to leave the Mount, but could not yet decide precisely what she should do. This being arranged, she wrote to Arthur a full statement of the whole matter, distinctly released him from his engagement, which, she said, she feared had already been irksome to him, and stated that she designed to seek at once for a situation as governess. She added that she did not wish him to misunderstand her views, and would explain them to him, although to no one else. She felt sure that any plan of residing with her grandfather would, from their different habits, be extremely unpleasant and disadvantageous to them both.

She referred however with earnest admiration to the noble qualities of the old man, and said that he was one from whom a queen might be proud to have descended.

She had hardly finished this letter, before Mrs. Nugent came to her in a foolish flurry of sorrow, surprise, and good-nature. She had adopted all her husband's opinions on this as on every other subject; but her heart was too much for her head; and in bidding Maria good-night she showed real feeling. The housekeeper did not present herself till later; and then she came in with a face of paleness and anxiety, and said, "Ma'am, you need not think any more of doing him good. He is gone to a better place, and has left you his blessing."

This new shock for a time completely overpowered Maria; and a long flood of tears gave her a melancholy relief. When she could again collect herself,—so vanishes, she thought, the last tie of human kindred that belonged to me on earth. The image of the cheerful, generous, unconquerable old man rose strongly before her as she had seen him that very morning. She could hardly conceive the possibility of his so sudden death, although he had himself foreseen it. The housekeeper said, in answer to her questions, that a woman, the wife of a labourer, had come to attend on him. By her account he returned from the Mount much exhausted,

and lay down on his pallet hardly able to speak. The woman, whom he had called on in his way home, and begged to accompany him, had given him drink; and after a time he had regained strength enough to explain himself, but was evidently fast declining. He was hardly alive when the housekeeper reached him; yet he seemed pleased when she mentioned who had sent her. With closed eyes and joined hands he articulated very feebly,—"Tell Miss Maria that I pray God to bless her;—God Almighty bless her!"—A few minutes afterwards he again opened his bright blue eyes, fixed them on the face of his visitor with a slight smile,—closed them again,—and expired.

Maria, strange as it may seem, slept during the night, and dreamed that she was a child gathering daisies, which she put into a basket that Jack Fowler held for her, and which he afterwards helped her to carry and present to Mrs. Lascelles. When she woke, all the events of the previous day also appeared a dream. But swiftly they broke upon her; and, although at first she trembled, she soon regained her strength and calmness, and felt that their gravity and sadness required all her energy. Having made up her mind as to the future, she determined to see Mr. Nugent; for she knew that her presence had an ascendency over him, which she would be far from equally certain of maintaining by letter.

She went down to his study, knocked at the door, entered, and found him sitting woe-begone over a parchment pedigree, examining to whom he ought to bequeathe his property. He rose at her approach, coloured, and stammered out, —"Well, dear Maria,—Miss Lascelles,—Williams I mean,—I trust you are satisfied with the communication you received from me."

She looked at him steadily and courteously, and said: "I have no complaint to make."

Then she took a chair and sat down; on which he grew more confused and more civil, and, also sitting down, said—"Can I do anything for you? I shall be most happy if you will let me know how I can serve you."

"Pray have you heard of the death of my grandfather?"

"Yes; Mrs. Simpson told me of it. Allow me to condole with you on the subject. I assure you I have always entertained a favourable opinion of him, and do not blame him,—that is, I do not so very much blame him,—for his concealment of the truth."

"Of course nobody dares imagine that any blame attaches to him. He only complied with the eager wishes of Mr. Lascelles, and could not suppose himself in any way responsible for the result of his private arrangements.—But I now wish to say, that, as I have so long lived in your family, and have not, I trust, at all disgraced it,

I cannot conceive myself asking any extravagant favour, if I desire to be allowed to remain here until I can make all the necessary preparations for quitting the house with propriety. During that interval I trust I shall not be pained by any superfluous remarks, either on my own parentage, or on the conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Lascelles. These are points which cannot, I think, be very decently commented on before me in the tone of your letter. If, as I presume will be the case, you agree to my wishes in these respects, it will give me pleasure to remain with you and Mrs. Nugent for some days; and I hope to show by my conduct and demeanour, that I am very sensible of the favour with which I have been so long treated both by you and her."

"It will give me great satisfaction that you should stay here as long as is convenient to you."

"I design, as soon as I can procure a suitable situation, to place myself as a governess."

"A very proper and judicious plan, and such as I should have expected from you. Is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Yes. Be good enough to give orders for the burial of my grandfather, in the most respectable manner practised among persons of his class. If,"—she added, with a slight look of scorn,—"you are so disposed, I shall be happy to have the expense deducted from the first payment of

the annuity of fifty pounds which you promised me; and I beg leave to say, that it is not my intention ever to trouble you for the payment of any further portion of it."

Here Mr. Nugent endeavoured to escape by adopting a more cordial tone. "Oh my dear Maria, why need there be any question of money between you and me? You must be aware that it would give me much gratification to supply you to the utmost. I only spoke of a trifling annuity, as thinking it might be pleasanter to your feelings than any larger income."

Baseness, thought Maria, has still one deep lower than another. She said aloud, "We shall be able to speak of this hereafter. In the mean time I rely on you for doing whatever is most right and respectful towards the remains of my grandfather. I wish them to be buried, if possible, where those of his family rest, in the burial-ground of the ruin which was the scene of the late fire. I will now go to Mrs. Nugent, to whom I wish to announce that I have your permission for remaining here, till I may find it convenient to remove to some other—home."

She hesitated at the last word; for she felt in pronouncing it that she had now no home on earth, and that it might probably be the happiest lot for her to be carried on the same road as her grandfather, to be laid beside him. She preserved her self-possession however, and, with an involun-

tary air of condescension, shook hands with Mr. Nugent before she left the room.

He immediately gave directions for having the funeral of the old basket-maker conducted with the utmost decorum, and sent a confidential person to the cottage to take charge of the arrangements, and see his orders executed. Women were employed to remain with the body, who relieved each other; and at nightfall the two sat together in the little room below, in the midst of the few implements and articles of furniture, the bench, the osiers, the tools, and the baskets. Among these was one which he had finished on the previous morning, before setting out to see Maria. The women were nodding on opposite sides of a solitary candle, when they were startled by a knock at the door; and on opening it two figures were dimly seen, one of whom, a tall female, entered, wrapped in a dark cloak. She said a few words in a low voice, which, half asleep as they were, they did not understand. She then walked up the frail and narrow stair, down which a faint light shone from the chamber above where the body lay. The woman disappeared noiselessly from the eyes of the astonished watchers; and some minutes passed before they regained courage to follow her. They did so with some trembling and treading on tip-toe; and, when they had gained the top of the stair, they saw her kneeling beside the mean pallet-bed, bent

over one hand of the corpse which she held in hers. They observed that the old man's favourite black cat had seated itself on the small table, which sustained a candle, and, while they gazed into the room, fixed its pale green eyes steadily upon them. The woman, they thought, sobbed faintly; and looking at each other they turned and retreated to the lower room. In the mean time the mourner looked at the tranquil face of the corpse, and then, again drawing her veil over her wet eyes, walked down the stair and passed through the room. The door was closed; but one of the women came forward and opened it, and saw the second figure in the darkness without, waiting for the one within. The visitor to the corpse glided silently away; and the two shadows were lost in the deep night.

Chapter XXXVII.

MARIA spent many of the following hours in reading and in prayer, in meditating on the character and history of the old man whose corpse she had visited, and endeavouring to retrace the probable condition of his family, and to divine what sort of person she would have become, had she been brought up as what she really was. On the following morning, after a disturbed sleep,

she awoke with even more anxiety for the future, than at any time since the discovery of her origin. It was possible that she might have an answer from Arthur, with whom she had never before permitted herself to correspond. She resolved however not to indulge her own reflections, but to act decidedly; and she employed herself, except while at breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Nugent, in writing to several of her friends to announce the change in her position, and to state the measure she had resolved on, in which she begged their assistance; indicating her determination at the same time very clearly, not to become dependent on any one, but to obtain her subsistence by her own efforts.

By this time the rumour of strange events and discoveries at the Mount had spread far and wide. Members of different neighbouring families presented themselves as visitors in the course of the morning, or sent to make civil enquiries. From some of these persons Maria felt confident of real friendliness. Nevertheless she declined to appear, and sat intent upon her task, till her maid brought her, not a message, but a letter from Arthur. It had no post-mark or direction, and only contained these words:

"DEAREST MARIA,

"Can you see me now? If not—when?

"Yours, "A. E."

The maid observed that her mistress coloured all over her neck and temples, and trembled, but with eagerness, not fear. She spoke in a voice of forced tranquillity, desired Mrs. Nugent might be asked to lend her the uninterrupted use of her boudoir for a short time, and that Mr. Edmonstone might be shown in there, where she would immediately join him. In a few moments more the door was closed upon them in the same room; and they had sprung for the first time into each other's arms. His arrival had dispersed all doubts and fears. She knew, without the help of words, that she was still loved; and his manner soon made her feel that she had never been dearer to him, or their engagement in his eyes more precious and sacred.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, after some minutes of silent emotion and overpowering joy, "Thanks be to Heaven! you are now free, and can be mine; and I can work for both of us, and feel that it is I for whom you live, and not for cold and proud relations."

"No," she whispered, "less free than ever; for I must now begin to regard myself as wholly yours, however long it may be before our union is realized."

"Why, long? Not, I trust, at the utmost more than a few weeks. My position in the world is changed; and my mind, I trust, even more so. But, as to outward circumstances, I

have been lying for many weeks seriously ill in body, and suffering also from the strangest series of phantasms and hallucinations. During all this time I have been attended with sedulous watchfulness by an old grand-uncle, who has returned from India after a life spent in the tropics. He, I know, will assist me with the means of settling myself; and my profession will do the rest, when I have hope and love to cheer me on. You will be contented without magnificence; and with clear consciences we shall both be happy."

"Why did you not let me know sooner of your amended prospects?"

"It was not till Tuesday evening that I was able to rise from bed, or knew anything of my true position. Your letter reached me on the following morning; and I am here sooner than my physician would have recommended. But he knew *nothing* of the cordial remedy which awaited me at my journey's end."

"I wish I could have been there to nurse you. You look thin, dear Arthur, but not ill. Did you suffer much?"

"No; I lay, I believe, for the most part in a kind of stupor. To myself I seemed surrounded by many figures, some of whom I had known before, and some not; but you were the principal personage among them all. There were Sir Charles Harcourt, and Hastings the traveller,

the poet Walsingham, the wife of poor Henry Richards, the white-haired and rather short man, whom I have heard you talk of as Collins, and old Fowler, your grandfather, whom I knew when I first knew you, and lived as a boy in this neighbourhood with my mother. There were also several others; and the movements and changes of the whole history turned upon a Ring."

She held up her hand before his face, which his first impulse was to kiss; but he saw that on one of the fingers was an Onyx Ring.

"How on earth did you come by that? It has haunted me as if a magic Ariel were fused amid the gold, or imprisoned in the stone."

"I will tell you. My grandfather died on Tuesday evening, the time, you say, of your recovery. My good friend Mrs. Simpson was with him at the last,—brought me an old tin snuff-box which I had before seen, and which had been found grasped in the hand of the corpse. It contained a certificate signed by Mr. Lascelles and the medical man then in attendance upon his wife, that the child of Mrs. Williams had been received by them from Fowler, and substituted for the dead infant. In the same box, wrapped in a separate paper, was the Onyx Ring. I presume it had been given to the old man by Mr. Lascelles as a token, which, to him who could not read, would be more expressive than

any written document, and would substantiate to his fancy that the supposed Maria Lascelles owed her being other than Mary Williams only to accident."

"A curious coincidence at least with my visions. But, as to the change in your name, it is of little importance; for I hope a third will soon obliterate both the former. My trance, how unsubstantial soever may have been the forms I conversed with, has at least left on my *mind intellectual and spiritual* impressions, too many perhaps and complex ever to be fully described, but of which you, I, trust, as well as I, may reap the benefit through my life. Now that you keep your hand quiet, and let me look at the ring close, I see the old man's head upon it is as beautifully executed, as if it were one of Weigall's finest works. Moreover it bears a curious resemblance to my uncle, who has watched me so tenderly in my illness; and I could almost have supposed it a portrait of him."

THE END.

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